

MARY J. REILEY'S
POEMS

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MARY T. REILEY'S POEMS.



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PREFACE.

These poems were consigned to my care for compilation as they were left by the author at her early and sudden death. A few had been published, but the majority were in abstract books, or on scraps of paper, just as she had first written them with little or no revision from her after-thought. Only a few, and scarcely noticeable, alterations have been made by the editor. Some, perhaps, have been retained from loving recollections of the times and places in which they were written that the author's matured taste and judgment would have rejected. The wood-cut which illustrates the "Indian Pipe" was made from the author's own drawing, and generously offered to her friends by the publishers of "The Pacific Rural Press" in which paper the poem originally appeared. Her last work she had prepared for publication except giving to it a name. I have called it

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as she left it, "Unnamed." A number of the miscellaneous poems also had no titles. Where the name seemed to grow out of the poem, or where I remembered what she liked, I have given names to such. Several I have been unable to name appropriately.

To the work I have given only the patient care of a great love, wishing that the taste of a poet and the skill of a scholar had been mine to give.

ED.

MARY T. REILEY.

The unfulfilled promise of this bright young life is one of the sad losses brought by the yellow fever which desolated so many southern homes in the summer and autumn of 1878.

MARY T. REILEY was born at Blairstown, New Jersey, May 18, 1858. Her father the Rev. John A. Reiley was an earnest and efficient minister of the Presbyterian church. Her mother, whose maiden name was Ann Carroll, was until her marriage a member of the society of Friends.

Mr. Reiley in 1866 removed with his family consisting of his wife and seven children, four sons and three daughters, to Oak Grove, a large plantation ten miles from Clinton, Louisiana.

May, as she was always called by her family and intimate friends, then seven years old, was the fifth child and youngest daughter. The childhood which

she recalled in after years was spent in the sunny south. The flowers, the skies, the trees, the air the very warmth of which she seemed to love to her were rich in memories and freighted with fancies. As a child she was remarkable for her loving and lovable disposition, her loyalty to truth, the tenderness that would spare the smallest insect pain, her early fondness for reading, the rapidity with which she learned, and the readiness with which she recalled.

There are royal methods of passage over the common road to learning ; hers, the swift easy flight of the meadow lark above the dust and toil of weary plodders. But nobler and better than the sweet song that cheered their way was the willing help and encouragement she gave to those who could neither sing nor fly.

She began to write when very young, but most of her early poems are without dates and many of them have been lost. There is a little poem addressed to her mother written at the age of eleven ; "Weaving" was written at fifteen ; "Voices," begun at sixteen and finished three years after. Nearly all the

poems published were written during the last three years of her life.

Her creative thought was remarkably spontaneous and under its control she composed with wonderful rapidity, showing on some occasions the rare power of improvising. During the recital of "Decoration Day" on that Day of Memories, a year ago, several lines of the poem escaped her mind and she improvised others, she alone knowing that anything was missing or made. "Heart's Desire" was nearly all written amid the noise and confusion of a fifteen minutes' recess at school. At one of the meetings of a literary society of which she was a member, there were unexpected visitors present. The president was mortified on account of having a meager programme, and noticing Miss Reiley's pencil busy during the exercises ventured to call upon her. To the surprise and delight of all she read a witty poem describing and explaining the situation.

Many of the humorous things she wrote were so related to incidents local and temporary in their interest as to be unintelligible to the general reader.

Her humor was fine and delicate, and, though not one of the strongest elements of her poetical power, hardly finds a sufficient representation in her printed works.

Her last work "Unnamed" was written during the latter part of July and August 1878. When we realize that this work was done in the intense heat of a southern summer, during a few weeks after her return home following three years confinement in school, under the immense strain upon her sensibilities caused by the sympathies and anxieties occasioned by the reports of the approaching fever, and interrupted by her attendance upon her younger brother during a dangerous illness ; we can only wonder at the power God shrined for a little while in her slight form then called to its more fitting place with him.

Her education was conducted at home, with the exception of one year spent at a boarding school in Clinton, until, at the age of seventeen, in September 1875, she came north to attend the State Normal School at Trenton, New Jersey ; from which she was graduated June 27, 1878 with the highest hon-

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ors, having given in scholarship and original work evidence of being the most gifted student of whom the School has record.

Soon after her graduation she returned to her southern home. So eager and anxious was she to see the dear ones from whom she had been separated so long and the home she loved so much that friends who would gladly have kept her north until autumn consented to her going. No thought of the terrible fever, which did not appear in New Orleans until three weeks after, and which had never been in the neighborhood of her home, gave anxiety to those who held her dear.

The father died on the 30th of September, the eldest sister Miss Amy, on the 15th of October, Mary T., on the 16th, and during the following week Mrs. Nesom her remaining sister, and her brother William.

Such is a brief record of the life that went out in the glory and promise of its twentieth year. But who shall write of what she *was*?

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“What practice howsoe’er expert
In fitting aptest words to things
Or voice the richest-toned that sings
“Hath power to give thee as thou wert?”

Thine was the poet’s gift of song ; thine, the noble and pure in girlhood, the strong and true in womanhood, the faithful and fearless in Christian love.

Across the night of our sorrow and loss there lingers yet thy memory, dimmed by no regret, darkened by no doubt. Down the dreary way of the days that are to come, where the voice of singing is no longer heard, nor perfume felt, nor beauty seen, we peer into the gray, striving by faith to catch, far off, a gleam of the radiance of thy present, praying that it may our future be.

H. M.

UNNAMED.

1878.

LOVINGLY DEDICATED
TO
MARY I. VAIL,
IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE PROMISE
OF
OUR SCHOOL DAYS.

UNNAMED.

CHAPTER ONE.

I THOUGHT the past was dead,
But it revives once more.
I thought the grief was fled,
But it returns once more.

And oh the cruel pain !
It wakes to life again.
And all my strength is vain
And all my hopes are o'er.

I thought the dream was dead,
Laid in the grave of years.
I thought they all were shed,
The piteous burning tears.
But out of the past's dark halls
A passionate spirit calls
And the dead comes forth again.

I thought I could look in his face
 With never a sigh of regret.
I thought 'twas an easy thing
 The old sweet dream to forget.
But what, when I look in his eyes,
If a tender light should arise—
A light I have seen before—
And kindle to life once more
The dying flame of regret?

And oh ! will it never vanish—
 The ghost of the buried years ?
And oh ! must I always remember,
 Remember with falling tears ?
Shall I never cease to sigh
For a time gone forever by
And a love that returns no more ?

If only I need not see them—
 The places where we have been !
We were here when the leaves were falling,
 We were here when the fields were green.

We have trodden these paths together,
We have wandered beneath these trees,
And I think I should not remember
If I could escape from these.

And if only I need not see him
Ever or ever again,
I think it would fade and vanish,
This piteous, gnawing pain.
But he is coming, coming,
And I must look in his eyes,
And I tremble lest I shall see there
The light that I know arise.

And if only I need not see her,
Need not look in her face,
The woman who stands beside him
In what should be my place !
For they say she is tall and stately
And her face is sweet as a prayer,
And I know if her husband loves her
I shall die of a dull despair.

I met his sister this morning
 But she looked the other way.
She will never cease to hate me
 That I once a "no" did say.
But why should she not forgive me?
 Her brother has found a wife,
So it cannot be that my shadow
 Darkened for long his life.

And oh if she only knew it !
 How hard it was to speak
The word that broke forever
 The tie that should never break.
And oh if she knew how bitter
 Is this lonely life I live !
I think, though she is his sister,
 She could not help but forgive.

I wonder if he is happy,
 If he never thinks of the past,
If he never thinks of a sorrow
 That, he said, would always last ;

If he never dreams in the evening
Of a time he cannot forget
Till his soul grows sick with longing,
And a passionate, vague regret.

If it were only over,
If I had only seen
The man with his wife beside him
Whose wife I should have been,
I think I could forget him.
But it always seems to me
He still is the faithful lover
He always used to be.
The very last time I saw him—
The memory *will* remain—
His eyes were dim and heavy
With a dull reproachful pain.

Would he look at me so to-morrow,
If to-morrow we should meet?
Oh! that look would wound me cruelly,
But pain is sometimes sweet.

Or would he stand there smiling
 With a smiling wife at his side,
And bow to me, coolly, calmly,
 With careless, happy pride?

I know not which would be harder,
 Which of the two to bear.
May God help me to forget him
 So well that I shall not care.

I sat last night in the twilight
 And watched the day grow dim,
What time the sorrowing south winds
 Were singing their vesper hymn.
The soft stars shone in the stillness,
 Up the sky the moon did glide,
When sudden the ghost of a buried pain
 Arose and stood by my side.
It stayed till the starlight faded,
 And the winds were far away,
And nothing remained but that shadowy form
 Uncertain, and vague, and gray.

It is over, it is past,
I have seen his face at last.
Have seen his face grow white with pain,
With a sudden longing, intense and vain.
And I know that he has not forgotten,
That he cannot ever forget.
I know that he has not forgotten,
I know that he loves me yet.

It was just when the night was falling,
And the west began to fade,
That I suddenly came upon them
As they walked in the cypress glade.
I came, unawares, upon them
As they stood by a cypress tree,
And a sudden change swept over his face
As he turned and looked at me.

As if he had seen a spirit
He neither spoke nor stirred,
But stared in my face, until I bowed
And passed, with never a word.

And I wondered what he was thinking
As I went over the hill ;
But I know, whatever his thoughts were,
I know that he loves me still.

But oh ! the winsome woman
He married a year ago,
Where, and how, did her girlish face
Find that look of weary woe ?
O pale, and sad-eyed woman !
He has sinned against thee and me,
But the sin he sinned against me was less
Than his sin in wedding thee.

O pale, and sad-eyed woman !
God help me to forget !
But what can the future hold for thee
But the pangs of a vain regret ?

It sings to me in the shadow,
It sings to me in the sun,

The sweet, enrapturing music
Whose strains are never done.
Oh ! sweet as the voice of a seraph
It sings and sings to me.

Oh ! faint, and far, and fading,
It is ever eluding me.
Oh ! give me the words, lest I perish,
That I may sing again
The wild, enchanting music
That is deeper than joy or pain.

Oh ! let the tempests bluster,
Let all the wild winds blow.
I loved my love in a golden clime
Years and years ago.

But the hard and cruel fairies,
They stole my love from me
And bore him away to a pearly throne
Far under the shining sea.

They changed him into a merman,
Whose blood is icy cold,
Who thinks no more, who dreams no more,
Of the tender days of old.

But let the tempests bluster,
Let all the wild winds blow.
He loved me true in a golden clime
Years and years ago.

If I could put my sorrows into words,
Methinks my grief would fade.
If into music I could change my pain,
The sweetest ever made,

If I could turn my sore heart's dripping blood
To words of blood and flame,
I would be willing so to live again
A hundred years the same.

Oh ! silvery white upon the Latmian isle
The fair Endymion slept.

Oh! silvery white the goddess o'er him bowed,
And love's hot teardrops wept.

But fair Endymion, he stirred, he woke,
The rapture broke his rest.
And far within blue depths the saintly moon
Slept upon heaven's breast.

Methinks, alas! I am Endymion,
But Dian, who art thou?
Fair figure with the backward sweeping robes
And filleted, white brow.

Sleeping, sleeping, the vision came;
Waking, waking, the vision fled;
And my heart is sick, and my blood aflame,
But my hope is dead, my hope is dead.

Over the mountain, and over the moor,
Silvery garments shimmer and shine,
In her wonderful beauty she walks secure
Wrapped in the robe of a light divine.

Murmurous music flows and floats,
The air about me is sweet with sound.
In the bliss of the faint and far-off notes
The sounds of the world for me are drowned.

Softly sighing adown the breeze
From the elysian meadows blown,
A voice more sweet than murmuring seas
Calls to me, calls, "Endymion."

A shadowy form with wreathed arms
Woos from a cloud of amethyst
On before, till her half-seen charms
Changing and vanishing fade into mist.

Always anear me, yet always afar,
A vision seen, and clasped, and gone.
A face above like a beautiful star,
A voice that whispers, "Endymion."

Never, that star, while days go by,
Will shine on me with steadier gleam ;

Only under the moonlit sky
I clasp my Beautiful in my dream.

Yet the far-off music greets my ear,
My soul is filled with its tender tone ;
And on the flying winds I hear
A sweet voice calling, "Endymion."

To-day I met him as I walked alone
The quiet forest road,
And swift, at seeing me, a sudden light
Within his dark eyes glowed.

I passed him by, he turned abrupt and said,
"Rejoice in what you see.
My house is left unto me desolate,
Your hand has ruined me."

My heart beat quick within me at his words.
I turned away my head.
"Oh mock me not with what yourself have
done,
Your own hand's work!" I said.

“ My work !” he slowly answered, and his
voice

Was hoarse, and changed, and low.

“ I loved you better than my own soul’s life,
And can you wrong me so ?

The weary days crept by and made the weeks,
The weeks have made the years ;
And life has brought me nothing yet more glad
Than slow, remorseful tears.

The day and night are all alike to me,
For dark are all my days.
A pall of night has settled o’er my life
And marred its pleasant ways.

Forgive me that I say it. I am mad !
I know not what I say.
Forgive me for the madness you have caused
And I will go my way.

Because I love you I will not unbraid ;
You could not love me true.

Alas! and what was I to seek to mate
So low a soul with you?"

I stopped him there, "You shall not wrong
me so.

My love was deep as life."

I said no more. Before my spirit gaze
I saw the sad-eyed wife.

I would have gone, but he constrained me still.

"One question answer me.

If I had come to you as once I came,
Pure from that stain, and free,

Could you have loved me even yet, my love,
After the weary years?"

He caught my hands, he looked into my eyes,
My eyes were dim with tears.

I caught my hands away. I turned and fled.

God help me! What was I

That I should throw away the precious love
For which I fain would die?

Every morn
When a new day to the earth is born,
The soft light kisses my waking eyes,
The soft winds say, Awake, arise,
See what glories grow out of the gray,
Behold the day.

Every night
The far stars shine with trembling light,
The winds are sighing unsatisfied,
The want of the world is unsupplied,
The glory has faded and died away
Into the gray.

I am weary, weary, weary,
Weary of day and night,
I would that my ears were deaf to sound
And my eyes were blind to sight.
Since I hear not the one sweet music,
And see not the one dear face,
What to me are all other sounds,
All other beauty and grace?

The one true friend of my childhood
 Stood at my door to-day,
And, "Child," he said, "You are white as a
 ghost.

What is the matter? Say!"

The one true friend of my childhood,
 He knew the tale of the past,
And I said, "He has come, and I shall die
 If this horrible pain must last."
His face grew kind and tender,
 He looked at me pityingly,
"Child," he said, "You are young and weak;
 Give your burden to me.
Come to my heart, my blossom,
 I will teach you how to forget.
I will show you, darling, a tenderer love
 Than you have dreamed of yet."
But I shrank away and whispered,
 "I can love no more, no more.
Dead is love's flower within my soul,
 Poisoned the fruit it bore.

Oh ! my heart is dust and ashes,
Thence never can new love bloom ;
Deep in my soul a grave is made,
And love lies in that tomb.”
“O Child, Child, Child,” he said,
“What of love do you know ?
What is that weak and trivial boy
That you should grieve for him so ?
O Child, Child, Child,” he said,
“What do you know of pain ?
Would you make the love of all these years
For a girlish fancy vain ?
That love is over and perished.
You love him not, it is dead.”—
“I love him with all the soul of my life,
With all my heart,” I said.
His face grew pale before me,
His voice grew suddenly stern,
“The man you love has a wife,” he said,
“You forget where his love must turn.”

Forget ! Nay, I remember.
Oh ! I remember well.

He loves me, loves me, loves me,
More than my lips can tell.
He loves me, loves me, loves me !
Can such a love be sin ?
But the sad-eyed sorrowful woman
Can never such sweet love win.

O stern white face of my childhood's friend !
Why do you gaze at me ?
Why do you haunt me, sorrowful wife ?
What have I done to thee ?

I do not love him, I cannot love him,
And strange to me it seems
How the face of a man I do not love
Gets tangled into my dreams.
But that face it is never tender,
It looks at me stern and pale,
And all alone in the darkness
It makes me shrink and quail.

I met him to-day in the meadow
Where we plighted our troth lang syne,
And he held out his hand as he passed me
For the rose I held in mine.

Did I mean to give him the rosebud?
Or did I but let it fall?
Why should he ask for a rosebud?
And what is it worth after all?

They call, the far sweet voices,
They call and cry to me,
“Sing us again the songs we sing
Over and over to thee.”
But when I fain would sing them
The mystical words are gone,
And I think how lone upon Latmos’ shore
Sat sad Endymion.

If I should give up all that I have loved,—
My life of careless ease,

The long days filled with day dreams, the
long nights

With pleasant fantasies,

If I should give up all, and lay my life

Down low before thy feet,

Could I be sure of gaining what I seek,

O Goddess proud and sweet?

If I should toil through weary years and
years,

And work in grief and pain,

Could I be certain that my faithful toil

Would not be all in vain?

Oh! still it seems to me, I cannot yet

Give it up all, up all,

Although for me love's rosy-tinted hours

Are gone beyond recall.

How can I be content to live through all the
years

And ever be alone?

Wast thou contented on the Latmian isle,

White-limbed Endymion?

I cannot get rid of the hateful words,—
The words of my childhood's friend,—
“Have you thought of what you are doing?
Have you thought where this must end?”
I have sinned no sin though my heart is sore;
Have given my love no sign.
What is a faded and withered rose
Betwixt his heart and mine?
O stern of face and stern of voice,
Why do you follow me?
I am no child to slip and fall.
I ask no help of thee.
Why do you haunt me ever?
Begone, nor come again!
For I know your voice is stern and cold
Though your face is white with pain.
One man has kissed my lips,
And that is enough for me.
One love has filled my heart,
There never another shall be.

A letter lies on my table,
And the writing I have not forgot.

A letter lies on my table,
Shall I break the seal or not ?
O sad-eyed, sorrowful woman,
Would your pale face flush to see
The writing upon the letter
That is lying here by me ?
Oh I had greeted this letter
With kisses long ago !
And now it lies beside me,—
Shall I break the seal or no ?

THE LETTER.

*What a flood of recollections
Sweeps over heart and brain,
As I trace your name on the paper,
After the years again !
How can I help but remember
What pride bids me forget ?
How can I teach my spirit
That I may not love you yet ?
I have striven through all the long years—
But all in vain I strove—*

*To banish the one sweet image
By another I did not love.
Enough of that. I write not
Feebly to make my moan.
I will try like a man to bear it
Silently and alone.
You know the pitiful story
How I wedded where love was not.
Long in the past I told you,
And the tale is not forgot.
Divinely you can pity ;
I saw it in your eyes
The day that you came upon us
Suddenly, angelwise,
And enough of that. The story
Is painful to you and me.
Not thus have I broken the silence,
Which henceforth unbroken must be.
I have never sent you your letters,
They were the last sweet tie
Binding my soul to its heaven
That far away doth lie.*

*And I could not bear to sunder
The golden cord—the last
That held me to all that was sacred
To me in the beautiful past.
But a sense of your right constrains me.
Ah me! What right have I
To hold myself to my heaven
Even by one sweet tie?
To-morrow, if you will meet me
In the place where we met long syne,
I will give you back your letters,
And you shall give me mine.
Fear not to come for this last time.
Solemnly, friend, I swear
I will say no word that the angels
Could shrink from, hovering there.
I will say no word to awaken
The ghost of the buried past.
I would only see you a moment
For the last time, the very last.*

And if I take him his letters?—
In that there could be no harm,

Yet from the thought of this meeting
I shrink with a vague alarm.
What would he say about it?
My childhood's stern-faced friend.
"Have you thought what you are doing?
Have you thought where this must end?"
It is right I should give him his letters.
It is right he should give me mine.
But what if I go to meet him
Where we plighted our troth lang syne?—
But what if I go to meet him
In our long ago trysting place?
Should I ever shrink, O sorrowful wife,
From your pale, reproachful face?
And why should I care for my letters?
They are nothing now to me.
Better give them up to devouring flame
Or toss them into the sea.
I seem to care for nothing,
For life, or love, or light.
I have lived so long I am weary,
And my strength is faded quite.

I cannot forget the words he spake,
Herman, my childhood's friend.—
“Have you thought of what you are doing?
Have you thought where this must end?”
I will look on the past and future,
Before it is yet too late;
For I seem to stand on the threshold
Of some dark, mysterious fate.
Why are my pulses throbbing?
Why burns my cheek with flame,
At sight of the paper he has touched,
Where he has traced my name?
What mad, sweet dream am I dreaming
While my fears are hushed to sleep?
Shall I ever awake from this torpor?
Awake to mourn and weep?
For I seem to stand unconscious
On some dark cavern's brink.—
And where this might have ended,
O God, I dare not think.
I will go away and forget him
For I cannot forget him here

I will give myself soul and body
To the work that I hold most dear.
I will never see his face again
I will think of him never more.
I will sing a dirge for the beautiful dead
Whose sorrowful life is o'er.

The seasons come, the seasons fade,
Deep in my heart a grave is made,
A still, cold form is in it laid.

The flowers bloom, and fade, and fall,
The clouds hang low and like a pall,
The ghostly winds each other call.

The dead lies calm within its grave,
And hears no winds of winter rave.
Its rest is still. Deep is that grave.

A Secret folded round from sight,
A Secret dread, and cold, and white,
Shrouded in silence, wrapped in night.

Silent I sit beside my dead,
The hours keep their wonted tread,
My soul to grief long since was wed.

Grief watches while the sun is high,
Nor sleeps while stars are in the sky.
We, watching, see the years go by,
The still, unchanging years go by.

Now all is over ! Yet a moment's space
Furl back, O mists of time, from off the face
Of my dead love, and let me gaze thereon.

Now all is over ! Three short years ago
How were all words too weak, all looks too
cold,
To tell the love whose deep tide ever rolled
From his heart unto mine unceasingly.

Now all is over ! Then this thing can be.
And love, the true, the tender, and the deep,
Can fade as fades the vision of a sleep
And leave behind no trace that it hath been.

Sunset upon the waters,
And sunset in my soul.
The light of the cloudy day goes out
With a golden anreole.
The weary struggle is over,
From pain I have found release ;
I walk in a quiet country
Beside the white-robed Peace.
I watch and pray for the dawning,
May it herald a better day.
A day that shall banish the phantoms
That lurk in the shadows gray.

CHAPTER TWO.

The waving hair of the willows
Is long upon the breeze,
The clouds are the beautiful billows
Of azure deeps of seas.

The winds are the summer's kisses,
On laughing lips they fall.
God fills the earth with blisses,
And his love is over all.

O brave true heart, upon whose strength I lean,
And resting there grow strong,
Forgive me that in madness once, I did
Thy truth and kindness wrong.

O brave strong spirit, in whose strength I trust,
And trusting it, find rest,
Of all good gifts to me thy friendship is
The dearest and the best.

I have bowed low and worshiped at the shrine
Where dwells the Beautiful.
The past indeed is past, and life for me
Is round, complete, and full.

O God, I thank thee that thy guiding hand
Has thus far led me on.
I thank thee that the present still is mine
And that the past is gone.

I thank thee that more dear than love's wild
dream
Thy hand has given me

The poet's dream of glory yet untold,
The poet's ecstasy.

The name and fame for which I fondly longed
I know cannot be mine.
It is enough for me that I have drunk
The poet's mystic wine.

My book is finished—my first book, the child
Beloved of my brain,
Brought forth in pangs of utter weariness
And throbs of pain,

Written in hours of rapture when my soul
Was filled with life and light,
And words poured freely forth intense and
strong
Instinct with living might,

They rippled forth like upward gushing streams
In music flowing on.
Now all is over. Rapture, pain, despair
Alike are gone

My one wee book ! What fate awaits thee now
Torn from the parent nest ?
Henceforward thou must make thy way alone,
My first, my best.

I can do nothing for thee though the world
Should spurn thee from its feast.
Go bravely forth, O little book of mine,
Fly west, fly east.

Poor little book ! I pity thee, my child.
Thou art not what I would.
Thou wilt go forth into the busy world,
And be misunderstood.

But if, while great ones spurn thee, thou shalt
bear
Comfort to one sad heart,
I am repaid for all my toil. I am
Contented, for my part,

If some sweet maiden trembling with the spell
Of love just opening,

Find in thy leaves one little, little song
She shall delight to sing.

If my book were only worthy
The name on an opening page,
It were worthy a name in the records
Of the noble works of the age.

For who is so true as my true friend?
And none is so wise and strong.
Forgive me that once, my one friend,
I did your friendship wrong.

I wonder if he has forgotten
What he said to me that day.
Would my life have been better and nobler
If I had not said him nay?

I think of those things calmly
They lie so far in the past,
And I know I have heard love's story
For the last time, the very last.

Once when my heart was younger,
When my cheek was not so pale,
I have felt at a well-known footstep
The swift blood flood and fail.

I had half forgotten the feeling
Which, after all, I know
Is the sweetest joy that ever
Our human lives can know.

Yet oft when the flowers are springing
In the morning of the year,
I wake to that hopeless sorrow,
That old, long-past despair.

Never again can a new love
Bloom on the grave of the old,
Never again while the stars shine
Shall I hear love's story told.

I used to long so madly
For happiness on earth,
But I feel as I grow older
That joy is little worth.

Better to live in sorrow,
To know life's glory past,
If so in the dusk and shadows
Some good be done at last.

Life's colors grow more sober,
Life's joys seem not so sweet
To our eyes, as we grow older
And find all things so fleet.

Our joys like sorrows perish,
Not love itself can stay ;
Ourselves and all around us
Must change and pass away.

I sigh no more for splendor,
I am content with shade,
Content to be sad and lonely
Until the daylight fade,

If only out of the shadows
Shall shine one burning star

To gladden, not my pathway,
But souls that faint afar.

If only when all is over
Somewhere, in some sweet heart,
A song of mine shall linger
Not ever to depart.

If, because my life was lonely,
I leave some word to cheer
Another soul in the shadows
When I am no longer here.

But my songs are all unworthy,
Till ashamed I bow my head,
And where my poor voice faltered
The hot tears come instead.

When the weary day is over,
And pale, the glowing west,
The stars shine white in heaven
And still my wild unrest.

So free from earthly sorrow,
 So pure from earthly strife,
So still, and white, and saintly
 Above the storm of life.
I forget the restless struggle,
 The baffled search forget.
While the white stars shine in heaven
 There is beauty to live for yet.

Somebody liked my wee book.
 Somebody liked it not.
And the world agreed to lay it aside
 To moulder and be forgot.

The critics took my wee one
 And tore it limb from limb,
But Herman said it was like myself
 And therefore dear to him.

And some one said in a letter,
 “Friend dost thou know thou hast
Perfumed thy book with the fragrant breath
 Of the balmy land of the past?”

White in the moonlight lies the world
Beauty rapt from toil and pain,
Dreaming dreams perchance of Eden
And her far-off youth again.

Would to God the holy quiet
Now might steal into my soul,
And that off its face illumined
Back the clouds of care might roll.

Dian, sweeter than the starlight,
Dian, purer than the snow,
Image of that dream of beauty
That I worshiped long ago,—

Over soul and sense is drifting,
Passion strong, and spirit sweet,
Once again the mystic story
How a god and mortal meet.

Once when youth was at its flood tide,
And when strength was at its hight,

I, too, hoped, divinely striving,
To attain divine delight.

Like Endymion on Latmos
I am wrapped in stupor sleep,
But no god-smile cleaves the darkness
Of that slumber still and deep.

Far away, and unattained
Now as then that vision fair,
And its beauty fills my spirit
With an infinite despair.

I suppose before long I'll be sighing
The vanished days of my youth,
I shall find that the gray hairs are coming
Before I am ready in sooth.

I shall sit in these rooms solitary,
And, with my old voice out of tune,
With no one around to console me,
To myself I shall mournfully croon,—

“I’m very old and there’s no one to love me,
No one to care for my trouble and pain,
None to remember the lonely old woman.
Oh for the days of my sweet youth again !
Oh for the days when I whirled through the
 dance,
When life wore the glamour of sweet romance,
When the clasp of a hand made the whole
 world sweet,
And my life moved in time to my flying feet !
Oh for the days of my plighting kiss
When nothing in life ever happened amiss !
For I’m growing old and there’s no one to
 love me,
No one to care for my troubles or pain,
None to remember the lonely old woman,
Oh for the days of life’s springtime again !”

Apparent is the Spirit of the woods.
She smileth ere she sinks into her sleep,
The long, long sleep of winter falling down
Upon her lids as falls the dew on flowers.

The air is dim with autumn's quivering haze,
The trees are dark with autumn's somber
 robes,

Save where between their sober ranks of
 brown

The pine trees lift their heads superbly clear
Against the glowing azure of the sky.

In every hollow lie the withered leaves,
But pine, and bay, and mystic mistletoe,
Still stand in vivid greenness to declare
Life sleeps within the wood, and is not death.

The holly berries gleam upon the boughs,
The barbed shafts of glossy leaves between ;
And from the hoary trees, the pendant moss
Streams long and weird upon the autumn wind
Like tattered shrouds of years forever gone.

There is a calm within the ancient woods,
A solemn hush that calls the soul to prayer.

Escaped at last from city toil and strife,
I feel the life of God about my life,
And all my soul lies open to his love.

I dream of higher things. I seem to feel

An inspiration from the solemn woods
And wide autumnal skies. My soul expands
To grasp the greatness of the thought divine
That works in forms of beauty 'neath my eyes.

If he had loved me truly that bright day
That now is long gone by,
Would he have suffered me to say him nay
So quietly?

It was his tender pitying heart that placed
Love words upon his tongue.

He grieved to see me left so lone, and sad,
And yet so young.

He would have given me such tender care
I should not ever miss,

In the new joy, the wild ecstatic thrill
Of first love's kiss.

But that is past for me. Alas! it seems
That everything is past.

There is no joy of earth however sweet
Whose life can last.

I sit here shocked and silent !

O pale and sad-eyed wife,
Was thy husband never a whit to blame
That thou wast weary of life ?

I sit here shocked and silent

And my cheeks are hot with shame,
That thou wast sick of the burden of life
Was I never a whit to blame ?

O Louis, Louis, Louis,

Thou wast false to me lang syne.
Thou hast been how false to the gentle girl
Whose life was merged in thine.

O Louis, Louis, Louis,

What would thy hard heart care
If a dozen women as sweet as she
Should die of love's despair ?

O Louis, Louis, Louis,

I pray to God above
To save my soul from the cruel snare
Of thy wild and selfish love !

I have come through the bustle hither
To hear some Solons explain
What the rights of a woman on earth are,
And decide whether she shall remain.
The speaker who holds the chief station
Is very well known to me ;
He is a doctor of laws, and of logic,
And I think of divinity.

The doctor has turned on the faucet
Of the well-spring of knowledge now.
Behold the deep corrugations
That learning has carved on his brow !
Behold as his thoughts soar higher
How they carry his eyebrows along !
And his voice swells up with a deafening roar
That would madden the genius of song.
Capacious, enormous, stupendous,
And more, is the doctor's mind ;
For all of his vast personality
Within it is snugly enshrined,—
A grand, white image of beauty
Symmetrical, perfect, and fair.

And ever around it his hovering talk
Lingers, or flies here and there,
Then back to the thing that attracts it,
Like a bird that hangs quivering o'er
The serpent's eye that has charmed it
And, leaving, comes back evermore.
With all that vast weight to withhold them
No wonder in trying to fly
His thoughts overburdened grow weary
And never pierce far in the sky.
Of old one King Midas, the same one
Who had very long ears as we're told,
Had a wonderful power of turning
Whatever he touched into gold.
The doctor 's like Midas in one thing,—
I don't mean the length of his ears,—
Which is, that whatever he touches
In a figurative sense disappears
And assumes a new form in an instant ;
Not just in the old Midas way,
For these things turn earthy and dreamlight
Grows the commonest light of day.

He touches the angels, and, presto !
 They're clayey, and weak, and frail ;
Their glory is wan and faded ;
 The glow of their beauty is pale.
And heaven itself, at his mention,
 Is paved with the poorest of gold
That was mined for so much a nugget,
 And was probably bought and sold.

The man that sits next to the doctor
 For a poet of fancy was made ;
But Necessity, hard-hearted spinster,
 Her hand on his shoulder has laid,
And said, "Leave your dreams and your
 visions,
 The haunting sweet voices that call,
Go, teach to the young generation
 That this planet is round like a ball."
He has bartered the visions of glory
 To the, which, as his right, he was born,
For the blackboard, the crayon, the ferule ;
 And he dies of a bitter self-scorn.

Poor poet ! Like Esau his father
He has given his birthright for gain,
And finds no place for repentance
Though he seek for it, yearning, in pain.

That woman, I wish I could paint her !
So placid, self-poised, and strong,
Who knows only one thing she shrinks from,
A word or a thought that is wrong.
She is like to a fountain in summer
Whose margin with dew is impearled,
Clear, pure, and deep, and whose being
Is spent for the good of the world.

Said Herman, "Don't grow strong-minded,
Be as brilliant and wise as you can,
But remember the work of a woman
Is never the work of a man."
I wonder if I *am* strong-minded.
My head feels sufficiently weak
To make me a womanly woman,
I'll not wait for another to speak.

But across the rows of faces
 What face at me looks pale ?
My treacherous cheeks are burning
 As I hastily draw my vail.
And I hurry away from the speaking
 Into the open street,
And I hurry, hurry homeward
 Lest a well-known face I meet.
That well-known face, I could paint it
 As it looked 'neath my girlhood's skies,
Tender, and proud, and pathetic,
 With its haunting beautiful eyes.

Herman sent me these flowers,
 Fairer ones never grew,
They were fresh as the breath of the morning
 New-baptized with dew.
Now they are wan and faded,
 And my eyes are dim with tears ;
For these flowers seem like emblems
 Of all our hopes and fears.

And most of all like symbols
Of the tender dream of love,
So sweet to the soul of the dreamer
Yet frail as a flower to prove.

Dead, all dead.

This lily was white as the drifting snow,
This rose once flushed with a passionate glow
When it blossomed in fragrant summer air,
But it faded and died of a slow despair.
This mignonette had the soul of a saint,
Around it still lingers a fragrance faint,
Long as it lived it blessed the earth,
But a spirit has whispered its spirit forth.
This jessamine see ! In the passionate south
The Spirit of Love kissed it mouth to mouth.
Remembering ever that rapturous kiss,
The breath of its life was a dream of bliss ;
And the soul of its soul was lavishly spent
In passionate love's abandonment.
Nor beauty, nor faith, nor purity,
Nor the might of love's divinity,

Could save them from the destroyer's tread.
The tale of their life is a tale that is said,
Dead, all dead.

Four blank walls that stare at me
Bound my narrow house of life.
There no sweet wild flowers come,
Chirp of bird, or wild bee's hum,
Dream of sweetheart or of wife,
Love's caress, or friendship's tone ;
Fate has built my house alone.

When the moon beams down the night
To enfold me in her light,
When the stars shine, and winds blow,
More and more this truth I know,—
Whatsoever I may be,
Wheresoever I may go,
All the years that come to me
As they found, will leave me so,
By these four blank walls shut in,
Growing sad as days go on,
And forever left alone,

By the friends who once were mine
In the far-off days, lang syne,
Half-remembered, half-forgot ;
And my books, my only joys,
Speak to me, yet love me not.
And the world sings to its own
While its bonny days go on.
Only I am all alone.

And these blank walls stare at me
Till I sicken, heart and brain.
And they throb before my eyes
Like an ever-present pain.
And they never widen grand
As I dreamed in days by gone,
Down long vistas stretching far
All alight with glory's star.
Evermore I am alone.

Out of the past a sweet strong wind
Is blowing, and blowing on,

And my heart is wildly yearning
For the joys of a day that is gone.
It blows from a land of fragrance,
It has kissed the roses abloom,
But it dashes my cheeks with a rain of tears,
And wraps my spirit in gloom.
For the fragrant land is haunted,
Haunted its blooming bowers,
Haunted the strong, and sweet, sweet wind,
Haunted the swaying flowers.

Faint to the ear of my spirit,
Fainter than long ago,
Faint, and far, but divinely sweet,
The mystical voices flow.
Oh but to catch for a moment !—
Oh but to sing them again !—
The songs of the far, sweet voices
That are deeper than love or pain.
How fair a thing is the summer !
How fair a thing is the world !

Lit by a thousand glimmering stars,
By silvery dews impearled.

Last night when the winds were sighing
Love tales in the linden tree,
I heard a voice from the garden
And my heart stood still in me.
Why did he call me Alice?
What right had he to my name?
He came and called me Alice.
And my cheeks burnt hot with flame.
And I fear, I fear he noticed
The sudden burning blush;
And I fear he thought 'twas returning love
That made my pale face flush.
But I did not call him Louis,
As I had done before.
For once I called him Louis,
My Louis, Louis D'Or.
And shall I write to Herman
That Louis has called on me?

Herman would think from my telling
That a dozen things might be.
He would think I cared for Louis,
And cared to have him call.
While the fact is known to my heart and me
That we do not care at all.
Never again, O Louis,
Never, never again,
Can the touch of your hand awake in me
The echoing chords of pain.
It is dead at last now, Louis,
And I knew not it was dead
Till you came and called me Alice
As you did in days that are fled.
But I did not call him Louis,
As I had done before,
For once I called him Louis,
My Louis, Louis D'Or.

It is enough for me to do my work,
And trust God for the rest.

If I indeed have drunk the poet's wine,
My work for me is best.

O woman heart ! O longing woman heart !

How weak a thing you prove,
Hungering, thirsting, growing sick and faint,
Sick for a little love.

Are there not infinite stores, divinely sweet,
Of heavenly love for thee ?
And hast thou not thy work, thy work on
earth,

Thy work, enough for thee ?
They were not meant to bless thee, O sad
heart,

The clasp of clinging hands,
The thousand sacred mysteries of sweet love,
The lore love understands.

They were not meant for thee. Be thou
content ;

Content with what is left,—
The pure, good work, which, if thou bravely
do,
Thou shalt not be bereft.

Wherever I go, I see a face
That I knew so well lang syne.
Wherever I go, those beautiful eyes
Follow and seek for mine.
Did you really love me, Louis,
So long and long ago?
Wide is the gulf between our souls,
Why do you seek me so?

Why has not Herman written
While all these days went on?
Why is my book unfinished
That long since should be done?
I wonder at Herman's silence,
Till my heart is sick with dread.
In his letter that came so long ago
He was coming here he said.
But if he came to the city,
Would Herman not come to me?
And if he were not in the city,
Would Herman not write to me?

It is thousands of years ago since I sang
In my careless joy to love's sweet tune.
My heart was as light as a dancing leaf,
And the air about me was sweet with June.
It was ages ago when my heart was young,
Sweet was the meaning life held for me.
The stream of my blood had a jubilant flow,
And I dreamed of delights that were yet to
be.
Every flower of the world was yet in the bud,
Every bud of the world would soon be a
rose.
The dew was not dried on the beautiful wold
Ere the hours of dawning drew on to a
close.
I sat in the sunshine. I dreamily sang.
The hours slipped by with a musical chime,
Ages, and ages, and ages ago
In the flowery fields of the olden time.

There was a time, O Louis,
I had given my life to you.

But the time is come, O Louis,
 When that I will not do.
And can you not see as I see it
 That the past is over and gone?
That it cannot awake into being
 While the days of our lives go on?
Believe that I care no longer.
 Believe that I love you not.
Do you think those eyes too potent
 For their spell to be forgot?

 It is true.
Hearts can change as seasons do.
Love, like sweetest flowers that bloom,
Finds at last a certain tomb.
 For I know,
Long-lost love of long ago,
All the passion and the tears
Of those far and faded years
Are as they had never been;
And there lies our hearts between
But a shade of cold distrust
Where warm love lies low in dust.

Woe is me !

That this bitter thing should be
That the Lethean river rolls
While we live above our souls,
That oblivion's waters steal
All the grief our hearts can feel,
And the deepest wounds must heal.

Fare thee well.

Nevermore awakes the spell
Of the sweet forgotten past.
All is over, dead at last.

Fare thee well.

Lightly the years go by me.

I cannot die of regret.
The past slips out of my keeping.

I cannot choose but forget.
The withered leaves lie not more dead
Beneath the icy north-wind's tread
Than lies the heart you once could move,
Unanswering, to your words of love.
The spell is broken, and I am free.
Henceforth your love is naught to me.

I fain would do my duty
Forgetting selfish ease,
But should I give my life up
A fickle love to please?

Have I the power of doing
All for you that you say?
Would my love make strong and noble
The life so weak to-day?

For Louis says, but for losing
My love so long ago,
His life had been brave and helpful,
Nor missed its purpose so.

He says though the years are flying
Time holds one chance for him.
Can I, whom he loves so dearly,
His life's sole brightness dim?

I am tired of doubt and query,
Tired spirit and brain.

I cannot believe I should sell my soul
Though it be for another's gain.

Why has not Herman written?
Over and over again,
I ask myself that question
With a dull and heavy pain.
There are rumors of plague in the city
And the people are fleeing away,
Louis is going to-morrow,
But I think that I shall stay.
I wonder at Herman's silence
Till my heart is sick with dread.
For those who dwell in silence,
Are they not the hosts of the dead?
It seems but a wretched pittance
To offer, this life of mine,
For I give what I would be rid of—
A gift they cannot decline.

Lo! Poor and sick of the city,
I offer to you to-day

A life of worth to no one,
That I fain would give away.
I have lived to myself these long years,
Now I will live to you.
For the short few weeks remaining
Some good, at last, I may do.
Louis is going to-morrow.
He would tease me with useless prayers
To flee from the coming terrors.
I must let him go unawares.
And if I die in the city,
O Herman, Herman, my friend,—
If I die in the plague-cursed city,
Will you ever hear of the end?

Louis has fled from the fever,
And left a letter for me
Pleading for sake of his future
I, too, from the plague would flee.
You care so much for your future,
Have you never a thought of mine?
I think, of old, I was drunken
With love's bewildering wine.

Blue are the heavens above me,
The whispering winds are bland.—
Lie there on my table, O letter !
For I cannot understand.
“ *Why have you so deceived me
About your future life ?
And why not told me sooner
You were to be his wife ?
I cannot believe you did it
My faithfulness to mock ;
You thought I loved so dearly
I could not bear the shock.
But there, my child, you wronged me.
If you are happier so,
I can bear to see you another's wife,
Though 't is terribly bitter to ;
But I cannot bear the knowledge
That you have doubted me.
Well! Well! Let it pass! There 's no reason
That I should indignant be.
You never wanted my love, child,
I knew it as well as you.*

*You will never know what it cost me,
But I loved you, loved you true
When I went last week to the city,
A man whom I knew of old,
The man you are soon to marry,
Your new betrothal told.
I did not come to see you,
I could not bear the pain,
With the deep, deep hurt so fresh in my heart,
Of seeing your face again.
If you had not deceived me,
It were easier to bear ;
But perhaps you did it to save me a pang,
Knowing how I must care.
I hope you may be happy.
It is late for me to speak.—
But how can I trust your future
To one so cruel and weak ?
Is it foolish, weak, unmanly ?
I am blotting my page with tears.
I have loved you, darling, with all my heart
These many weary years.*

*O Alice ! my poet woman,
Alice my woman saint !
How can I bear to lose you now
Nor die as my hopes grow faint ?
I shall not see you again, child,
I have grown so shamefully weak
I fear I cannot bear yet
To hear your sweet lips speak.
Some time, perhaps, in the future,
If fate is kind to me,
I shall grow used to my burden
And this will cease to be.
Perhaps you had pitied me, Alice,
Had you known how all must end.
Always through all time, darling,
Believe me, your truest friend."*

I cannot understand it !
O Herman, *mio ben* !
Have you loved me on in silence
Through all these summers then ?
How could you so much wrong me
That specious lie to believe ?

How could you so much wrong me
To doubt I would deceive?

If Herman truly loves me
Life grows more sweet to me,
Yet I may die in the city
Before his face I see.
And I fain would see him once more
Before my life is past
To tell him I was faithful,
I loved him at the last.
Yet even for love of Herman,
Though he loved me in tender truth,
Could I forego the visions
That glorified my youth?
Forget the dreams, and longings,
The glory, and the bliss?
Forego them all for the rapture
Of love's betrothal kiss?
Oh! not for me was love made,
It never was made for me.

I have grown used to the knowledge
That this can never be.
I have given my strength of spirit,
My strength of body and brain,
All to my Art's sweet service ;
What gifts for Love remain ?
For Art will have all or nothing,
All that is mine or me,
And love demands that his portion
Soul, body, and spirit be.
Only one life is given,
Only one life to live.
Could I sunder spirit from spirit
And to each a portion give ?

How poor and helpless is our human love
How weak our human strength.
I cannot even reach my friend and say,
"I love, thee, dear, at length."
I cannot even say, "Though great my fault,
Of this thing I am free,

In all the days when I was most beguiled
I never doubted thee.”
But, wrapped within the dreadful arms of
Death,
Into the shadows dim
I must go down, and never see his face,
And never speak to him.
For I will give my life though it be poor,
My strength though it be weak.
Perchance to die for men were poetry
More sweet than I can speak.
I would that I had done some good on earth
Before the bitter end.
I would my lips had drunk one soul-deep
draught
Of love’s delight, my friend.
Alas! my life has failed of all its ends,
Well may my soul make moan.
Into oblivion’s unending night
I must go down alone.
The one dream of my life was but a dream,
A flower without its fruit.

The songs that sang so sweetly in my soul
Upon my lips were mute.
The one, true friend who gave me all he had,
What have I given him?
A heart stab, and a blight that made the light
Of his best days grow dim.
My life has missed its purpose. Evermore
A voice is at my side,—
A voice that croaks to me of wasted life,
And will not be denied.
Sick unto death am I, yet would not die;
Sick of my life, yet fain more days would
live;
If so, perchance, I might e'en yet, tho' late,
The wasted past retrieve.

The pestilence walketh in darkness,
Destruction at noon is abroad.
We bow down our heads in our weakness,
And call on the name of our God.
Oh God in humanity clothed,
Have mercy on man Thou hast made;

Grant, ere there is none to beseech Thee,
The terrible plague may be stayed.

Oh sweet ! oh sweet ! the idle joys of living,—
The summer sky's intense, delicious blue,
The winds a-whisper, and the flowers a-blossom,
The fresh earth dashed with white baptismal dew.

The far-off joys of life for aye renounced,
Warm life, filled up with color, light and bloom.

I shiver from the cold unknown hereafter,
The mist and darkness, the engrossing gloom.

Dead silence broods above the fated city,
An atmosphere that chills the soul with dread,
A horror curdling through the very life-blood.—

It seems some haunted city of the dead.
Changed is the air, the very sky is changed.
Dead horror, still, impalpable, intense.

How vain seem now our loves and hates, how
trifling,

The idle things of life, the joys of sense.
O mystic land before me stretching endless,
'Twixt me and thee a veil of mist outrolls.
With longing eyes I search the gloom demand-
ing

Thy secret, O thou unknown land of souls.
Trembling I stand before the mystic portals.

Beyond is darkness, cold, and hushed, and
dread,
Gray, flitting ghosts, vast mist-engendered
phantoms,

The shadowy armies of the shadowy dead.
O Infinite Supreme, Source of our being,
Giver of life, Endless of life, Eterne,
Grant now to me one holy revelation

For which in darkness and despair I yearn.
Reveal Thyself to me, O God the Father,

The Father of our spirits, God alone.
Reveal Thyself to me, O God the Spirit.

Reveal Thyself to me, O God the Son.

Brought face to face thus with the dread
 Hereafter,
 Life's fictions torn away, the soul stands
 bare ;
But for our faith in thee we die, we perish
 Crushed by the weight of a divine despair.
God give us grace to do our simple duty ;
 Be brave, be strong, content to work and
 wait,
Ready to do His will until He sendeth
 His angel to throw wide the unseen gate.

Yesterday in the fever ward
 The doctor told a tale
Of a man who bravely entered the homes
 That made the strongest quail.
He seemed to feel no burden,
 Fatigue he did not know.
Where danger was the greatest,
 He was always first to go.
But lately he had missed him,
 And dared not hope that he

Had failed to fall a victim
To his humanity.
He was so worn in the service
His frame could not resist
The fever as it should do,
He would be greatly missed.
“What is his name” I queried,
Grown curious to hear.
“His name,” the doctor answered
“Was Herman Delaterre.”

And art thou dead?
Entered through starry gates into thy heaven?
While evermore my spirit unforgiven
Dwells in the awful Valley of the Shade,
Yet cannot die.
Perchance, if thou art dead,
Thy soul can hear me when to thee I cry,
“True to thy love forevermore am I.”
I love thee, O my love, and art thou dead?

Not dead perchance
But fighting in these noisome haunts of pain
The fiend of fever that with burning chain
Has bound thee. Never loving glance
Benignant meets thy own ;
No loving hands assuage the fever pain.
My friend ! My Herman ! Dying, dead,
perchance,
Dying—my love—alone.

If thou art gone, and life for me is done,
And I should meet thee far beyond the sun
Where flit gray ghosts of warm humanity,
Phantoms of things that were, and things
to be,
Should I be aught to thee? or thou to me?

It cannot be when life for me is o'er
That I shall see my love no more, no more,
Somewhere, somewhere, upon a golden shore,
I yet shall feel his arms about me fold.
God plans a meeting for us far away,
In other climes, upon another day,

When I, too, pass beyond the shadows gray
 And see my sad life as tale that's told.
There is no grief—One wipes away all tears.
There is no death through endless blessed
 years ;
There is no night, and there shall come no
 fears.
 There lives immortal love, and grows
 not old.

Last evening I went sorrowing
 Soul wrapped in one idea,
To pray for the soul of Herman my friend,
 In the church of St. Sofia.
The church was dark and lonely,
 But, in a column's shade,
A single lonely worshiper
 Like myself, in silence prayed.
I gazed o'er the stately altar
 At a figure of the Christ,
The Lamb of the Atonement
 For sinners sacrificed.

I gazed at the stately altar,
 But soul and lip were dumb.
I had come to pray for Herman,
 But the prayer thought did not come.
I could not shape a prayer.
 I knew that all was vain.
Silent I sat, unmoving,
 Mute in a trance of pain.
I saw through the realms of phantom
 That dreamlike stretched away,
My lonely Life Henceforward
 Stand desolate and gray.
With even Death like a lover
 Proven false in the hour of need
My dreary Life Henceforward
 Stand desolate indeed,—
A wounded thing, creep slowly
 Through lengths of weary years
With nothing brighter than heart ache,
 Nothing sweeter than tears.
Forevermore unloving,
 Forever unbeloved,

Down wearisome gray vistas
My Life Henceforward moved.—
Suddenly just beside me
I heard a gentle stir,
And glancing up I saw there
The lonely worshiper.
His face was toward the window,—
How can I tell the rest?
For before I thought 'twas Herman
I was sobbing on his breast.
A peace came out of heaven
And wrapped the world from sin,
Opened the gates of heaven,
And our spirits entered in.

When the dusk was softly falling,
And down the lonely street
The light winds kissed the dead leaves,
And the dead leaves kissed my feet;
Out of the dark cathedral,
Into the silent night,
We went away together
As the moon swam into sight.

Far down the fading twilight
 Glimmered a trembling star,
And I knew 'twas the tender star of love
 That shone for us afar.
Under the saintly moonlight,
 Under the smile of heaven,
The weary world after penance sore
 Lay peaceful and forgiven.

When the day awakes with a rosy flush
 And skies grow bright above me,
When the sweet winds sigh from the blossom-
 ing south
Then most, my love, I love thee.

When the sun sinks away to his palace of rest
 And skies grow dim above me,
When the sweet winds sleep in the arms of
 the south
Then most, my love, I love thee.

Once to my eyes my Love and Art seemed
hostile.

I stood between and doubted which to
choose

Lest, though I found a joy beyond my hop-
ing,

The sweeter blessing I might chance to
lose.

But something now has taught me clearer
vision.

I walked in darkness long, but found the
light.

No longer foes, but reconciled in spirit,

The twain seem now as one before my
sight.

For Love and Art are but the humble service

I offer unto Him who gave them both ;

Who crowned my spirit with a threefold
blessing,

And laid upon my soul a marriage oath.

LONGER POEMS.

WATER LILIES.

WHEN Spring comes slow,
Reluctantly from the voluptuous south,
The kiss of southern lovers on her mouth,
The smell of southern flowers in her hair;
And cometh loath because her heart is there,
And turneth oft and weepeth tears of pain
And to be gone is fain.
When all the days grow dim
And filled with gloom,
Then nature breaks into her advent hymn,
Then water lilies bloom.

The days wane on.
The Spring grows kind again.
Ceaseth the frequent rain,
Ceaseth the chill and gloom,
Over the land stealeth a faint perfume.
The water lilies bloom.

The days wane on.
Over the northern hills th' inconstant Spring has
gone.
Up from the sweet south comes a fairer guest,
The loved, the best,
The Summer with rich gifts of largesse come
From her far southern home.
She comes, and lo !
Before her flowers blow.
The vales are fragrant with all rare perfume.
The water lilies bloom.

They bloom, and lo !
From chaliced cups of snow
Their incense fling upon the grateful air.
The white leaves open, slow
And timidly, revealing
In chaliced cups of virgin snow
The golden, tremulous, quivering heart ;
Whence rarest odors stealing
When the white petals dream apart,
Tenderly, timidly, stealing forth,

Like prayers of saints are heavenward borne
Yet sweeten earth.

They lie at rest
On the dark water's breast
Like a white star upon the veil of night.
Soft color tints their leaves
With faint auroral light,
The glow of sunset in the flushing west.

What spot on earth
Is found of so much worth
To bear this loveliness?
Where rivers to the sea
Flow onward gladsomely
There surely is their fitting place of birth.
Upon some flashing river
That floweth on forever
'Twixt banks of blossoms to the solemn sea,—
Where giant forests spread
Wide-reaching arms o'erhead
And make for it a path of fragrant gloom,

There is the place on earth
Fittest to give them birth,
There should the lilies bloom.

And bloom they there,
Rejoicing in the beauty and the light
Spreading their petals white
Upon the limpid stream,
Upon the happy water flowing onward in a dream
Of light, and sound, and motion, to the solemn-
sounding sea?
The banks are bright with blossoms, but for them
there still is room.
The air is filled with music and with delicate per-
fume.
There do the lilies bloom?

Not there. Not there.
Not on the flashing river
That floweth on forever
Not where the forests bending make fragrant dells
of gloom.

Not where the streams are flowing
With light, and sound, and motion
To join the throbbing ocean
Do the water lilies bloom.

Where shall we seek them?
For their home is low.
In dark, dull pools the lilies grow.
From murky depths of night
Stoled all in spotless white,
From murky depths of gloom
Tinted with faint auroral light
The water lilies bloom.

The days wane on.
The first spring flowers have faded long ago.
Faded the hyacinthine glow.
Faded the purple of the violet.
The Spring has gone with all her wealth of bloom.
No loiterer lingers yet
On vale or hill,
Yet still
The water lilies bloom.

The days wane on.
The Summer days are long and still,
By vale and hill,
The Summer flowers begin to fade.
In all bright places where are warmth and light
The flowers fade from sight.
Yet still in their low homes of murky gloom
The water lilies bloom.

So have ye seen,
When all life's fields were green,
From lonely and neglected spots
Grow sudden flowers of love and faith,
Bloom wild forget-me-nots,
And heart's-ease, and each flower that hath
Some fragrant mission to the soul.
So ye have seen, if ye have seen the whole,
The flowers of love and faith
Live through the spring's warm
days,
Bask in the summer's blaze,
And sweeten all the dreary road to death.

So have ye known
Light out of darkness, joy from sorrow grown,
Life's waves of bitterness
Yield snowy flowers to cheer and bless.
From depths of deepest gloom
White lilies bloom.

It seems the earth has not
One barren spot
That Spring cannot awaken and gladden into
bloom,
It seems to darkest things
Summer her largesse brings,
With white hands overflowing with sunlight and
with bloom.

There is no place so sad
But Spring can make it glad,
No spot so full of gloom
But when the word is spoken
Its long night shall be broken,
Its spotless lilies bloom.

THE HOLY GRAIL.

IN the days when wise King Arthur
Ruled over his Table Round,
The gallant knights went on a quest
Seeking east, seeking west,
For the Holy Grail that had vanished away
Many and many a year before,—
That had vanished away, and been seen no more,
Though holy men had fasted and prayed,
With tears, and sighs, and penance sore,
For the Holy Grail to come once more.

Sometimes before the longing eyes
Of holy monk, or praying nun,
A light like that of noonday sun
Sudden flashed, and sudden died.
In shining clouds of dazzling white,
The Holy Grail upon their sight
Flashed a moment and was gone.

And none could tell the way it went
 So soon the sudden light was spent ;
 And never knight,
 Or anchorite,
 Or holy monk, or virgin pale,
Had sought and found the Holy Grail.

One day King Arthur's gallant knights,
 Clad all in panoply of mail,
 Went riding forth upon their quest,
 Seeking east, seeking west,
To find the Holy Grail.

They vowed to heaven a solemn vow
 To right the wrongs of the opprest,
 To keep their honor white and pure,
And leave unto high heaven the rest.
 Then bound upon each knightly breast
The badge, where all the world might see,
 Of Honor, Truth, and Courtesy,
And fearless rode forth to their quest.
 Seeking east, seeking west,
 Seeking south, seeking north,

All bound upon the selfsame quest
The gallant knights rode forth.

And one found in a mossy glade
A bower of bloom, a smiling maid,
A fount that in the sunlight played,
A cool stream rippling through the shade.
Sore with the heat of toil opprest

He turned aside to rest.

Beside the murmuring stream he stayed,

Forgot his holy quest.

And a mystic song through the forest rang,

And a mystic voice low sang,—

Weak hope, weak faith must fail, must fail.

He who seeks the Holy Grail

Will seek in vain if he turns to rest.

Endeth here the warrior's quest,

And one tale is done.

And one rode over hill and vale
And came to a palace great and strong,
Around him the vassals began to throng

Saying, "Thou who wearest King Arthur's mail

Right for us now the wrong we bear,

Free from the foe these stately towers,

And thou shalt be lord of us and ours."

The good knight turned from his holy quest

To right the wrongs of the oppress.

They made him lord, and bowed the knee,

He stayed to reign where he went to free.

In the fruitful lands of the blooming west

He laid aside his burnished mail,

He sought no more for the Holy Grail,

Forgot his holy quest.

And a mystic song through the palace rang,

And a mystic voice low sang,—

The weak of purpose must fail, must fail,

He cannot find the Holy Grail,

Though long he seek, he will seek in vain,

For the lust of power and love of gain

Will prove too strong for such an one.

And another tale is done.

And one rode over field and moor

Till a wide plain opened before his sight,

Whereon in clouds of dazzling light,
The Holy Grail shone white and pure.

But straight before, and on either hand,
Came the spirits of evil, band on band ;
Back to the sunshine flashed in light
Their burnished helmets and weapons bright,
Behind them, pure and grand,
The Holy Grail shone white.

He had not shuddered at mortal foes,
He had not trembled at giant's might,
But he turned away from the spirit fight.

And straight before him the vision rose,
And the Holy Grail into heaven was caught.
Then his bosom was filled with a wild despair,
The wild despair of a soul unblest.

He threw aside his burnished mail,
He sought no more for the Holy Grail,
Forgot his sacred quest.

And a mystic song o'er the wide plain rang,
And a mystic voice low sang,—

*The faint of heart must fail, must fail,
He cannot find the Holy Grail.*

*Only o'er foemen overthrown,
Only through dangers and struggles past,
Can the Holy Grail be found at last.*

And another tale is done.

And one, as he rode from land to land,
Caught the treacherous gleam of shining sand,
Caught the treacherous gleam, and thither rode,
While fair on the soft wind his white plume flowed,
And fair in the sunlight his armor glowed.

But lo ! On that sand he sank, he sank,
Never he reached the farther bank,
Down and down till the world 'gan swim,
Down and down till the light grew dim,
Down and down till over his head
The shining terrible quicksand spread,
And the sunlight faded and died for him.

Down, far down from warmth and bloom,
Down, far down into changeless gloom,
The horrible darkness and damp of the tomb.

Down, far down from sun and air,
And the angels in heaven know not where.

Oh ! pray that the demons far below
That fatal whither may never know.

Seeking east, seeking west,
Seeking south, seeking north,
All bound upon the selfsame quest
The gallant knights rode forth.

But only Sir Galahad the pure,
Only Sir Galahad the true,
Turned not aside from his holy quest.

Seeking east, seeking west,
He stayed not for pleasure, he shrank not from pain,
He sought over forest, and meadow, and plain
For the glint of the Holy Grail.
But wherever a deed of good could be done,
Or help could be given to an outcast one,
Or succor to him who was sore opprest,
Then ne'er did his kindly spirit fail,
Then was his knightly lance in rest ;
So forth he rode on his sacred quest
Seeking the Holy Grail.

And lo ! as he rode from land to land
The winds of heaven his forehead fanned,
Out of the darkness a soft light shone,
Whispering winds were around him blown ;
 He saw before him a beckoning hand.
After brave deed of kindness done
He came to the land of 'the setting sun,
 Through the golden gates of that shining land,
 A vision dawned upon his sight.
There, in a glory pure and grand,
 The Holy Grail shone white.
In the fruitful land of the blooming west,
 He threw aside his burnished mail,
 He rode no more on his sacred quest,
 He found the Holy Grail.
And a mystic song through the portals rang,
And a mystic voice low sang,—
 The pure of spirit, of purpose strong,
 The knightly soul that shrinks from wrong,
 The kindly-hearted shall never fail,
 To him is given the Holy Grail.

*The world shall rejoice in what is done,
And gladder be for the prize that's won.
For he that seeketh seeks not alone
To himself for the Holy Grail.*

Valedictory Poem, State Normal School, Trenton,
New Jersey, June 27, 1878.

CLASS SONG.

 VERY thing is going,
And whither does it go?
Time and tide are flowing,
And whither do they flow?
They call, the sweet world voices—
They call us on and on,
And every heart rejoices
Although the past is gone.
Yet 'tis gone, forever gone.

And who shall do his duty?
And who shall turn away?
Whose path shall lie in beauty?
And whose through shadows gray?
They call, the sweet world voices—
They call us on and on,
And every heart rejoices
Although the past is gone.
Yet 'tis gone, forever gone.

SIR WULFERE'S QUEST.

THE day was fading, the day was low,
The far sun shone with a crimson glow
Lighting the depths of a forest old
With a streaming glory of red and gold.
Under the glory and under the shade,
In anguish of spirit Sir Wulfere prayed,
“O Thou who diedst upon the tree,
Come from Thy heavens and pity me.”

A whisper crept through the boughs of oak.
A spirit voice to the kneeler spoke.
But he knelt so low on the mossy ground
His ears were dull to all finer sound.
He knelt so low on the earth, I ween,
He saw not the heavens' glorious sheen,
Though far in the west above his head
Wide banners of glory his Lord had spread,

And from every tree in the haunted wood
The birds were singing of Christ the Good.
He knelt so low that he could not hear
The whispered words that met his ear ;
And he was not 'ware that all around
The silences were alive with sound.

He prayed until that hour when, above the moun-
tains gray,
The night sees visions in the east that tell her of the
day ;
And all the night, above the trees, within the silent
sky,
The stars yearned down their gleaming rays to draw
his soul on high.
And on the shining pathway, against the murky
night,
The holy ones passed to and fro in robes of trailing
light.
But low he knelt, so low, so low, he saw no form of
air ;
Nor even in the eastern sky, the morn break clear
and fair.

Sir Wulfere rose from his vigil sad
And his heart was heavy and dead.
“I have prayed all night to a pitiless sky
That mocked my prayer,” he said.
“I will wander forth in pain and grief
And bitterest penance do.
Perchance when my soul is weaned from earth
Heaven’s glory will shine through.”
He doffed his coat of shining mail,
And laid his lance aside ;
And clad in sackcloth forth he fared
To seek through the world so wide.
For weary years and for weary years
He wandered in sorrow and pain,
Nor by night nor day in his castle hall
Through the years was he seen again.

One night at the postern a bugle blew
And the warden woke in dread.
“Sure that is my lord from spirit land
Who summons our souls,” he said.
But he opened the gate that had long been closed,
While his hand it trembled sore,

And Sir Wulfere rode in the flesh of life

In at the open door.

The friar arose from his chosen seat—

And ever his beads he said—

“Now I charge thee tell, by the holy rood;

If thou art alive or dead.

For thine eyes are wild as a spirit's eyes

And thy face is white and wan.

I charge thee tell, by the holy rood,

If thou art spirit or man.”

Sir Wulfere made answer, “Night and day

Have I wandered year by year,

Mine eyes have beheld the Lord in flesh

And therefore I am here.”

The friar crossed himself where he stood,

And told his beads the while,

“May God forgive the words thou hast spoke

And keep our hearts from guile.

Now tell me the tale of thy wanderings,

And God keep us from sin,

And if ever a fiend hath spoken to thee

Mayst thou God's mercy win.”

“ By night and by day, in sorrow and pain,
I wandered for weary years ;
Seeking for mercy from heaven above
With prayer, and penance, and tears.
But the heavens were deaf to my yearning cry,
And closed to my blinded sight,
No voice spake peace to my troubled soul,
No morning brought me light.
Thus year by year like a restless ghost
Did I pass from land to land
And none had mercy upon my soul,
No succor seemed at hand.

At last I came to a wondrous plain—
God's spirit pardon me,—
But I thought it the land of eternal death
Where the evil spirits be.
For dim and gray stretched the earth away
And a gray sky stooped to meet,
And ashes and dust was the crumbling earth
Beneath my pilgrim feet.
The light that lay on that dreary plain
Was neither shadow or shine,

But a light like that where hopeless souls
In endless sorrow pine.
There was never a sound but a piteous moan
Like the voice of a wandering ghoul,
And lo! as I shrank from the dreary scene
A sleep came down on my soul.
What time went by 'neath that dark sky
As I lay wrapped in a spell,
Or what spirit broke my body's yoke,
My lips can never tell.
But when I awoke from that charmed sleep,
Shuddering, and afraid
Shorn of the flesh it erst had worn,
My shivering spirit strayed."

Faster the friar told his beads,
And crossed himself the while,—
"May God assoilzie thy sinful soul
And keep our hearts from guile."

"Now the air about me was thick with forms
Of many a fiend and ghoul.

And I was 'ware as I wandered there
 They strove to possess my soul.
They were evil things on shadowy wings
 And the air was alive with sound ;
And all the while with a ghastly smile
 My body lay on the ground.
Then I was 'ware of a sudden light
 Shimmering, soft and fair ;
And in its gleam the evil things
 Seemed melting away to air.
The light grew brighter, and demon form
 With form did intertwist.
Fainter and fainter they grew and grew
 Till they vanished into mist.
Brighter and brighter grew the light,
 And a musical sound upsprang,
As though the harps of the heavenly host
 O'er a ransomed spirit rang.
Louder the heavenly music grew,
 And the light was fairer than day,
Then prostrate fell my trembling soul
 And never a word did say.

But I felt, as a sleeping child might feel
 Its mother bend above,
That a holy presence was over me,
 And my soul was wrapped in love.

Then the music ceased, and I heard a voice,
 But strange it seemed to me,—
It sounded like to the whispering winds
 That kiss the greenwood tree.
The voice said, 'I am Christ the Lord.
 Thy sins are washed away ;
I gave my life on holy rood
 To succor souls that stray.
Look up, look up, O shrinking soul !
 To him who died on tree.
Behold the glorious banners gleam
 Of the Lord who loveth thee.'

Thereat, alert with joyous love,
 I raised mine eyes to see.
And I beheld the heavenly One,—
 Yet strange it seemed to me ;

For as I looked it all had changed,
 Yet of change I was not 'ware,
I only beheld the morning light
 Break in the sky most fair.
Banners of gold and crimson light
 Streamed up before mine eyes,
And a spirit voice swept past my ear
 Like a wind at some sunrise.
And all my soul in flesh was clothed,
 And my spirit filled with light.
Then straight I prayed and the Lord seemed near
 And heaven just out of sight."

The holy friar drew in his breath.
 He had ceased his beads to say,
He had almost neglected to cross himself,
 And half forgotten to pray.
And he said, "'Tis a strange and wondrous thing
 Some dream has brought to thee,
For would Christ speak thus to a sinful soul
 And not to a priest like me ?

Sir Wulfere answered never a word

But a soft light shone in his eyes.

He wandered no more to seek his Lord

'Neath cloudy or sunny skies.

There was never a breeze through the greenwood
sighed

But called his spirit to prayer,

There was never a morning broke in the skies

But he saw a vision there.

A spirit spoke in the morning breeze

And smiled in the evening sky

And the angels came down the ladder of light

When the evening stars shone high.

VOICES.

TO him who in the olden time in flesh spake to
his Lord

God came not clothed in terrors with his
avenging sword,

He came not in his anger, not in snow nor hail nor
rain,

He was not in the earthquake's shock, or flying
hurricane.

He spake not to his servant in the terror of his ire.

He was not in the lightning's glare, or quivering
tongues of fire.

I

Over the soul of man on the desolate shore of life
Sweepeth the tempest of passion leaving his spirit
bare.

Gone is the sunshine of hope, the beautiful light of
life.

Strong are the powers of darkness, the terrors of
despair.

Upon that shore of life, loud roar the billows of
death.

He hears their hoarse deep voices, he feels their
tossing spray,

The bright things he has treasured and has worn
upon his bosom

Upon the foaming billows are drifting far away.

God is not in the tempest, and the tempest passes by.

But the dark clouds of hopelessness still linger o'er
his way.

The bitter anguish passes, but as far as he can see

Before him stretch the sands of life, a desert cold
and gray.

Silence brooded o'er the face of heaven.

Then a Voice came solemnly and slow,

“Downward tendeth man the unforgiven

Through weary paths of woe.

Never changing sun or morn or clime
Bringeth to his gloomy state relief.
All his fleeting joys are naught but cloud joys
And change to rains of grief."

Sighed the winds, and sighed the restless waters,
Moaned the universe ; then silence came
As ruin cometh with the flying storm
And blackness after flame.

Then the Voice wailed out across the silence,
As o'er the quivering bosom of the skies
The red-winged lightning of the vengeful storm
Goes forth for sacrifice.

"Through the dreary ages of creation
Man is naught and man will never be
Till the years gaze from their fallen temples
Upon Eternity.

Never changing sun or moon or clime
Bringeth to his gloomy state relief.

All his fleeting joys are naught but cloud joys
And change to rains of grief."

II

The firm earth rocks like the wind tost main.
The towers of our trust are falling.
There is nowhere to rest, there is nothing to trust
And fiery fiends are calling.

Out of the depths of the reeling earth
The fiendish voices are crying.
There is nowhere to flee, there is nothing to trust
The hope that we loved is dying.

Helpless we stretch out our aimless hands
For light in the darkness groping.
There is nowhere to rest, there is nothing to trust
We are sick of delusive hoping.

Give us rest, but rest for a moment's space,
Firm earth for our feet. We are falling.
There is nowhere to flee, there is nothing to trust,
And the fiendish voices are calling.

Darkness and gloom and horror,
Shadowy, flitting forms
Fiendish whispers, "No hope, no hope."
Is there One above all storms?

III

Fire, burning fire.
No rest, no peace.
Is there One who from torture
Can give me release?

Fire, burning fire..
Unblest, unblest !
Is there One who will take me
Unto his rest ?

Longing and dreading.
Afraid to believe.
Is there One far above me
My soul to receive ?

IV

A still small voice : God calling,

“What dost thou here ?

Lo ! thou art the child of my tender love,

Be of good cheer.

Arise and come to my vineyard,

Drink of the holy wine,

Eat of the bread of eternal life.

Lo ! thou art mine.”

Life's joys are but cloud joys,

Soon they change into rain,

But it gladdens the hillsides,

Makes fruitful the plain.

What flowers are springing

Of patience and faith

Whose perfume anointeth

The soul unto death !

THE ROVER.

WHEN the western wind was dank with rain
Over the sea the Rover came.
Over the sea from a far countree,
Where he had wandered for glory and gain.

From scenes of blood and of death he came
To clasp his own to his heart again.

Oh his own was weary waiting !

Seven times had the leaves grown sere
Faint with the breath of the dying year,
Since over the sea from his own countree
The Rover went seeking in danger drear
Glory, and honor, and worldly gear
To lay at the feet of his lady dear.

Oh it was weary waiting !

He sailed and sailed when the sun was high,
He sailed when the stars shone over the sky,
Over the sea to his own countree.

Weak, and wounded, and ready to die,
No hope in his heart, and no light in his eye,
And on his lips the piteous cry,
What comes of this weary waiting ?

For in shine and in shower, by night and by day,
Down the steep of the world he had sailed away.
He had seen a sight that he dared not name.
He had done a deed of darkness and shame.
His hands were red and his heart was sore
For the sin he had sinned, and for her who wore
The pledge of his love on a lonely shore,
And whose heart was weary waiting.

As the Rover lay in a slumber deep
Slowly the ship sailed to the strand,—
To the shore of the sea in his own countree.
But a troubled vision sank into his sleep
Or ever his ship had gained the land.
Oh red was the stain upon his hand !
And sad was the weary waiting !

The vision's face was veiled from sight,
The vision's voice was cold and low,
And the Rover could not guess aright
Whether it came for weal or woe.
Far off he heard the tempests blow
On the desolate, wind-swept ocean.

The vision's voice was hushed and low.
It fell upon the Rover's ears
Cold and soft like the fall of snow,
Soft and still like the fall of tears
Day and night through the lonely years
When the heart is weary waiting.

“Thou hast the glory thou went'st to seek,
Thou hast the worldly gear and gain,
But thy strong right hand is waxen weak
And dyed red with a grievous stain.
Not so shalt thou clasp to thy heart again
Thine own, who is weary waiting.

Spotless and white the hand must be
That white and spotless hand to win.

Wilt thou keep the wealth that has come to thee?
Wilt thou keep the glory? and keep the sin?
To all the world thou mayst entrance win
Save only to her who is waiting."

Wilt thou lose the wealth of earth and sea
Which for earnest seeking thou wand'redest forth?
Wilt thou lose the glory that came to thee?
All thou hast sought for in dolor and dearth,
The fame of the world and the wealth of the earth
Wilt thou lose for one who is waiting?"

"What boots the glory that I should choose,
If I must wear it in lonesome drear?
Free as I won them, freely I lose
Glory, and honor, and worldly gear,
All for the sake of my lady dear.
Alas for the weary waiting!"

"Thou hast given thy life's best days
To win the wealth thou dost lightly lose.
Think what awaits thee, men's fair praise,

Glory, and honor. Pause and choose."

"Lo! I have chosen. Them I lose,
Lose for my love who is waiting."

"Spotless and white the hand must be
That white and spotless hand to claim.
Thou hast given the good that came to thee,
But thou must be washen white from stain,
White from thy deed of darkness and shame
Ere endeth the weary waiting.

Billows of grief o'er thy heart must roll
Ere the stain can be washed away.
Waters of bitterness flow o'er thy soul
Ere thou art worthy to clasp for aye
Close to thy heart while the world shall stay
Thine own who is weary waiting.

Wilt thou bear the grief that will come to thee?
Wilt thou bear the sorrow? and bear the pain?
The face of thy waiting love to see,
To clasp thine own to thy heart again,

With hand and heart that are free from stain
After the weary waiting."

"Lo ! I have suffered pain and grief
To win the wealth that has gone from me.
Why to-day should I seek relief
From pain instead of my love to see ?
But brief, oh brief ! may the sorrow be ;
For long is the weary waiting."

The vision's face was veiled from sight,
The vision's voice was hushed and low,
And the Rover could not guess aright
Whether it came for weal or woe.
Nearer he heard the tempests blow
On the desolate wind-swept ocean.

Nearer he heard the tempests blow,
Louder he heard the billows roll ;
But the spell of his slumber held him low
And the spell of his sleep was on his soul.
The vision held him in strong control.
Alas for her who is waiting !

The lady lay in a fever-sleep
Where troubled visions held their sway.
And her maidens whispered, "Weep, oh weep!
The lady dies ere the dawn of day,
And the loved of her soul is far away.
What comes of the weary waiting?"

Why do the seething billows swell?
Why do the waters spread so wide?
Sure never before on the surf-beat shore
Was seen such a high and wondrous tide.
Lo! who on the billow's crest doth ride
After the weary waiting?

The waters came with a surging swell,
The waters came with a sullen roar,
Beating the strand like a funeral knell,
And laid him low at the lady's door,
All his journey ended and o'er;
Ended the weary waiting.

When the western wind was dank with rain
The Rover went down to the sea again.

On the shore of the sea in his own countree
Whence he had wandered for glory and gain
He clasped his own to his heart again.
Ended and over the pitiful pain,
Ended the weary waiting.

IN THE SOUTH.

IN many a sunny field where grasses waving
Bend rippling to the summer breezes' swell,
In many a forest where the solemn voices
Of giant trees have caught a funeral knell,

By many a mighty river flowing seaward
Whose banks are darkened by the cypress shade
Or brightened by the golden-flowering jasmine,
The lowly graves of gallant hearts are made.

There in the silence of the summer twilight
Is heard the lone cry of the whip-poor-will.
There weep the summer rains their tears of pity.
There summer dews fall tenderly and still.

There thousands sleep—the loved and the remembered.

There thousands sleep—the brave and the forgot.
Amid the unknown and unremembered sleepers
There lieth one whose low grave is unsought.

No hand puts back the trailing wood-vine's tangle ;
No lips bend reverent down to kiss the sod ;
No woman's heart breaks o'er it in wild anguish ;
The sleeper sleeps in silence with his God.

He had a hard fight, but the strife is over.
He had a dark road, but the light has come.
Long ago the weary heart ceased beating,
Long ago the tired lips grew dumb.

When the troops were quartered in the valley—
Troops of a New England regiment—
As a guard upon some old plantation,
He with a command of men was sent.

'Twas a fine old place upon the river,
Dim with memories of a hundred years,
Fragrant with the breath of climbing jasmine,
Tall rose-trees, and trailing eglateres.

Fragrant cedars closed around it, darkly,
Tall magnolias reached up to the light.

'Twas a proud old place fit for the story
Of some lady fair and gallant knight.

And the romance castle had its lady,
Fair as any of an eastern tale
With dark tresses fragrant, musk-empowered,
Falling from the dim mesh of her veil.

Dreamy dim her dark eyes, vision-freighted,
Dreamy with the langour of the east.
She had wandered from an eastern story,
Stol'n by genii from a fairy feast.

So the young guard thought the day he saw her
Stealing underneath the cedars tall,
With her dark eyes full of wistful longing,
Gazing southward o'er the garden wall.

So he thought as day by day he watched her
Down the dim walks of that garden old.
Once he brought her a great bunch of jasmine,
Hoped she'd take it—would not think him bold.

And she took it. Rosy clouds of color
 Flushed her dark cheek, and the princess tall
Deigned to speak to the blue-coated soldier,
 Stayed a moment by the garden wall.

And the days went by, the tender, dreamy,
 Sweet days that the south alone can give,
When to breathe is a delicious rapture,
 When 'tis bliss untold simply to live.

Days went by, and the proud eastern princess,
 As if freed from the enchanter's spell,
Lost her quiet for a changeful languor.
 Who the meaning of the change might tell?

Day by day his blue eyes gleamed and softened
 Drinking deep the radiance of her own.
Day by day he smiled, content with hearing,
 Listening the low music of her tone.

And the end came. You and I could guess it.
 They guessed not that any end should come.

They thought not of war and war's divisions,
Dreamed not all the meaning of the wild war drum.

She the daughter of a southern household
He a soldier of the rank and file,
With a blue coat for his badge of fealty,
Dared to dream their dream of love the while.

Summons came to him one summer morning,
"March at once and join your regiment,
The enemy are lurking all around us,
Battle we suppose is imminent."

There was nothing strange in the brief letter,
Yet the young guard sat with bended head
Silent long, and when at last he went out
To the day, the day seemed dim and dead.

All the light had faded from his future.
When he went away he'd leave, beside
The mere romance of the charmed castle,
Light, and life, and love the tender-eyed.

He gave orders to the men on duty.

They received them with a glad huzza.

It was dull work out here in the country.

In such orders they'd not find a flaw.

And he said good bye. The dark-eyed princess

Had gone back beneath the wizard spell.

She was proud, and still, and cold, and silent.

What had caused the change? Ah! who can tell?

E'en her rosy lips had lost their blossom,

The little hand she laid in his was cold.

Wild, mad thoughts swam dizzily before him

As he stood that white hand in his hold.

Then he turned away ; but in a moment

She was by him, and, before his eyes

Held a miniature on ivory painted

Of a fair boy face with dreamy eyes.

“Take it,” said she hoarsely, “’Tis my brother ;

If you meet to-morrow in the fight,

Spare him for my sake. Good bye forever."

So she passed away from out his sight.

But the next day when the fight was raging

At its very height, his comrade saw

A young colonel of the charging forces

Close with him hand to hand and saw him draw

Back his arm for the last fatal effort,

When he glanced into the colonel's face,—

Dropped his weapon, and the moment after

Fell down lifeless in the crowded space.

The colonel was a gallant looking fellow,

A mere boy with dreamy southern eyes

And fair face ; he got away unwounded,

But the fallen soldier slept no more to rise.

When they buried him they found some flowers,

Faded things, so dead one could not tell

What they were ; his comrade called them jasmine

From a lingering hint of fragrant smell.

There was a little miniature beside them,

They thought his sweetheart's, but to their surprise

'Twas a fair boy face with dark locks curling

Round the brows, and dreamy southern eyes.

RETROSPECT.

AMID the dusk of coming darkness,
'Mid the twilight's deep'ning gloom,
Breezes from the past are blowing,
Laden with a faint perfume
Of the flowers that flushed and faded
Years and years ago for me,
When the flush of morn was fairest
And the bloom was on the tree.

Mem'ry like a solemn river
Ever flows before mine eyes,
Mem'ry of a time long faded,
Greener earth and bluer skies.
And a fair face floats forever
O'er the deep tide of my dreams
As the snowy water lilies
Float above their native streams.

Once that face held all the brightness
All the gladness of my life,
Guiding star and flower of beauty
Spirit face of my young wife.
Flushed that face like clouds of morning
On the day she was my bride,
Paled that face like clouds of evening
On the morrow when she died.

In the morning flashed the billows
When we put away to sea ;
On the morrow low and sullen
Was the dirge they sang to me.
Dark above the tossing water
Stooped the Storm with low'ring frown,
Hand in hand we dared its fury
As the gallant ship went down.

But the billows in their passion
Caught the hand held in my own.
Life ebbed from me into darkness
Then came back to me, alone.

Life came back without life's glory,
Shorn of all its joy and light,
Filled with voice of moaning waters,
Darkened with a moonless night,

Night whose dawn came never, never
Through the weary waiting years,
Night whose winds blew from the ocean,
Night whose dews were dews of tears.
But, as, in a lonely country
Wrapped about in gloom of night,
Some worn wanderer dreams of beauty
Till his weary way grows bright ;

So I dreamed of bye-gone beauties,
Of the dear delights of yore,
Till I fancied in my weakness
They were round my way once more.

As a trav'ler finds, far distant
From his home, a river wide
Flowing from the tiny streamlet
When a child he played beside ;

And, heart-filled with fragrant fancies
Of that far-away, sweet time,
Hears the music of its billows
Sound an unforgotten chime ;

So I stand beside the river
Flowing from the past to me,
And its music is the music
Of a voice from out the sea.
And a fair face floats forever
O'er the deep tide of my dreams
As the snowy water lilies
Float above their native streams.

HEART'S DESIRE.

ONE summer day I sailed away
Across the bounding sea.
The sky was clear above my head,
The waves were flashing free,
And all the sky was full of light,
And full of light the sea.

I watched, within the old sea town,
The light upon the spire,
Until the belfry changed into
A belfry built of fire ;
For underneath the belfry tall
She sat, my Heart's Desire.

I sailed away, away, away,
Across the bounding sea ;
And soon above the waters blue
They came to welcome me—

The maidens I had seen before—
The maidens of the sea.

Long days before, when from the shore
I sailed away alone,
A sea-king whispered, "Choose for thee
One of these maidens fair to see ;
And then come dwell beneath the sea,
In a wonderful palace of glamourie
Where the sea will ne'er make moan."

And I laughed aloud, as I answer made
To the sea-king's offer fair,
"Nay : let thy maidens, undisturbed,
Still comb their emerald hair ;
For they are cold for me to love
And I know of one more fair."

So lightly and so carelessly
I answered the sea-maids' sire.
For four things go to the making
Of my beautiful Heart's Desire.

And two are flowers and fragrance,
And two are frost and fire.

Oh ! the beautiful, beautiful sea-maids
With their streaming emerald hair !
Oh ! the beautiful, beautiful sea-maids
With their features cold and fair !
I leaned o'er the prow to watch them
Before I was well aware.

Their eyes were as dark as the deep sea waves
And bright as the gems that shine.
Their cheeks were as white as the drifting foam.
Their lips were redder than wine.
And the voice of their song was sweet and strong
As the voice of the crested brine.

But as I heard it, high and higher
I heard the voice of my Heart's Desire,
Singing beneath the belfry spire.

Beautiful, beautiful maids of the sea !
Low and soft came their song to me,

And in that song there was glamourie.
They lulled me into a reverie
Of pearl-fashioned palaces under the sea,
Where all things splendid and sparkling be,
And I sank into dreams as I rocked on the sea.

For still as I watched them, low and lower,
Until I could hear its cadence no more,
Sounded the singing from off the shore,
Where underneath the belfry spire,
Which the setting sun had turned to fire,
Was sitting and singing, my Heart's Desire.
I slept and dreamed, and waking seemed
And wandering under the sea.

And the fairest maid of the sea-king's home
Was ever leading me.
There were horrible sights of dead men's bones.
There were horrible sounds of dying groans.
And the light of her beautiful features streamed
On horrible monsters that coiled and gleamed
With slimy brightness; and writhed and coiled,

While the slimy waters bubbled and boiled,
And in the midst of the sights of the sea
The beautiful maiden was lost to me.

When I awoke from my dreams on the sea,
The world looked faded and strange to me ;
And I shivered with cold, as an old man might
Who had been out on the waves all night.
I shivered as though some maid of the sea
With her icy breath were near to me.

On a cold, cold day, I sailed away
Back to my native town ;
And smiled as I saw the waters blue
Sweep over the sedges brown ;
And sighed as I saw a funeral train
From the heights come winding down.

And shivered more with deadly cold,
As I stepped upon the shore ;
And the slow-moving funeral train
Came near me more and more,

And I saw the face, in the fading light,
Which the sunbeams quivered o'er.

Under the gleaming belfry spire,
Which the setting sun had turned to fire,
Solemnly chanting, a funeral choir
Bore to her grave my Heart's Desire.
My hair was grey as I stood by the sea.
My beard on the cold air floated free,
And the whole wide world was dark to me
As the setting sun sank into the sea.

LONG AGO.

I HAVE grown old, and the cap that I wear
Is scarcely more white than my faded hair,
And the little pink bows I fasten there
I am told have a very old-fashioned air.

And sometimes I think I remind myself
Of a dainty old gown that was laid on a shelf
In my dear mother's house, old-fashioned and
 queer,
With a faint sweet smell of dried lavender.

Though all things are changed that belonged to me,
And nothing is left as it used to be,
This sweet fall weather brings past things again
As flowers revive in a warm spring rain.

It isn't often I think of such things,
But the soul of the autumn within me sings

And tells me strange things that are sweet to me
Of the days and the hours that used to be.

And so in the time of the fading year,
When the first green leaves grow faded and sere
And the clouds are so fleecy and light above,
I think of the days when I was in love.

Of course those days were long ago.
The orchards were white with fragrant snow.
The winds were whispering everywhere.
And I never since saw the world so fair.

It all began one sweet spring night.
The stars were faint in the moon's soft light.
And I went to a party across the way
At Judge De Vere's with Percy Gray.

I wore a skirt of white brocade
Full and short that just displayed
My white silk slippers, on which I chose
To wear that night a faint blush rose.

My long white bodice with pointed waist
With cords of silk was closely laced.
It was trimmed with down and here and there
With blush rosebuds; and buds in my hair.

That long-past night I remember yet.
The opening dance was a minuet.
And Percy and I danced side by side
To the silvery sounds in the parlor wide.

The night was a maze of flowers and bloom,
Of music and light and rare perfume,
Of tender words and of shining eyes—
And then I was out 'neath the moonlit skies,

Out 'neath the skies with Percy Gray,
And why I had come I never could say;
Walking along 'neath the swaying trees
Whose boughs were kissed by the evening breeze.

The fragrant winds they touched my cheek,
The soft moon shone, but he did not speak,

And my heart beat fast with a quick delight
That was not due to the summer night.

I cannot tell the how nor when.
I had never a thought of love till then.
But before I knew the thing was true
We were walking along as lovers do.

•

Walking along in a dream of bliss,
My heart wild beating at love's first kiss,
My hand warm clasped in another's hand,
And my young feet straying in fairy land.

It all began that night in May
When winds were soft and flowers gay.
The summer days were fair, how fair !
They slipped away I know not where.

They were golden days filled to the brim
With beautiful thoughts of love and him.
They were flying hours with winged feet.
Ah never since then has time been fleet !

For when the summer days were done
And the trees flushed red 'neath the autumn sun,
A plague swept over our little town
Mowing the bravest and strongest down.

And we went away, but I fell ill.
The world grew dark and time stood still.
And day and night the fever drank
My blood of life till all hope sank.

But after all the fever passed
And I came back to the world at last,
To find its glory passed away
And laid in the grave with Percy Gray.

I did not grieve so much for him.
It was not that, but the world grew dim,
Grew dim and gray before my eyes
The glory dashed from its glowing skies.

I did not pine to hear him speak
Nor to see his face, but I felt so weak,

So weak and helpless and all alone,
The light and color and beauty gone.

I did not want to live again
And take up the weight of an endless pain.
Yet still I lived ; till my hair, that day
So bright and brown, is thin and gray.

And I rarely think of those days gone by
Save under a tender autumn sky.
But it always brings strange thoughts to me
Of the days and the hours that used to be.

TAKING THE VEIL.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SISTER REGINA. *A nun.*

SISTER ALICE, *A nun.*

LADY ABBESS.

EULALIE. *A young lady about to take the veil.*

CAPTAIN. *The lover.*

A BOY.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*A lonely garden. The lover alone, standing as though waiting for some one.*

Capt. The hour for our meeting draws on. Will
 she dare
To risk what she must if she grant my wild prayer?—
Yet she promised.—This waiting is horrible.—See!
What dream of delight through the dusk comes to
 me!

Eulalie ! Eulalie ! She comes through the gloom.
Now blest am I, though this dark spot be my tomb.

[*Enter Eulalie.*] *He starts forward.*

Heaven bless you for coming.

Eulalie. Nay, come not more near.

For one moment alone I can meet with you here.
My footsteps are guarded ; there are spies every-
where.

For one moment alone I eluded their care,
For the last time on earth to say, Farewell forever,
To the friend that I loved. For fate with its never
Shuts the future away from me. This is the end
Of my life in the world.

Capt.

Think you I would send

With such eagerness hither to bid you to come,
When I knew all the terrible risks you would run,
With no purpose beside this, to whisper the last
Tender words that will shut out forever my past?
Not so. All is ready to bear you away
From this horrible death again to life's day.
To-morrow ere this we two will be far

On our way to a land where no prisons there are
Which pretend to be gates unto heaven.

Eulalie.

Too late

Are your efforts to shake off the bonds of my fate.
To-morrow I take the black veil. Nevermore
Shall I look in your face as I once did of yore.
Let me go! Tempt me not! I am sinful and weak.

Capt. The hour of your taking it? *Eulalie*, speak.

Eulalie. Eight o'clock in the evening.

Capt.

Not so. Oh not so!

For six is the hour I have fixed on to go.

Eulalie. I cannot escape those who watch me.

Too late

Have you come. Give me up, give me up to my fate.
They will miss me if here any longer I wait.

Capt. One moment. To-morrow at six meet me
here.

Some way you will find to escape. Never fear.
And then we are safe. Can I trust you will come?

Eulalie. Risk nothing for me. I am used to the
dumb

Unquestioning torpor of pain. Let me die.
I cannot escape them.

Capt. But say, you will try.
Only that much, will try to come here at the time
I have set.

Eulalie. I will try, and farewell. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE.—*A room in the convent. The abbess and two nuns seated.*

Sister Regina. Holy mother, I dread
Lest Sister Ignatia is out of her head.
You know she has wept until even tears fail,
Through the dread which she has of taking the veil.
But a change has at last come over her mind.
She has grown to be cheerful, and seems quite
resigned
To the holy vocation before her. I think,
Lest her mind change again, now she stands on the
brink

Of this step, it were better to have the thing o'er,
And to alter the hour from eight unto four.
What think you?

Abbess. Why, just as you think will be best.
Perhaps, if 'twere done now, before she has guessed
At our plans, since you say she's resigned,
She would not have time to again change her mind.

Sister Regina. (*Rising.*)
Then I'll let it be known that in thinking it o'er
You concluded to change the hour to four.

Abbess. (*Calling her back.*)
Let a messenger straightway be sent out to call
To my aid the young friar of Esk, Father Paul.
[*Exit Sister Regina.*]

ACT III.

SCENE.—*The court. Sister Regina. Boy.*

Sister Regina. The lady superior has sent her
 commands
For you to deliver this note to the hands
Alone of the young friar of Esk, Father Paul,

And to say to his worship to make ready all
That is needed for Sister Ignatia to-day
At four instead of at eight. Now away
And waste not a moment but be here again
Some time before noon. I will be with you then.

[*Exit Sister Regina.*]

(*Boy stands with hands in pockets.*) [*Enter Eulalie.*]

Eulalie. Sister Regina has been with you? What
did she say?

Boy. She said I should carry this letter away
And tell Father Paul he should be here at four
Instead of at eight as she'd planned out before.
And I'm thinking the Captain will be rather late;
If he waits until six at the old convent gate.

Eulalie. You have done so much for me, but now
will you go

Straight off to the Captain and tell him I know
All of this, and unless he is here before four
My face upon earth, he will see never more?—
But how can I see him?—But tell him to come
And keep Father Paul for a while yet at home.
Some time perhaps I can repay you for all.

Boy All right, Miss, I'll try to keep back Father Paul.

ACT IV.

SCENE.—*A room in the convent.*

[*Eulalie seated. Enter Sister Regina.*]

Sister Regina. Young Sister Ignatia, the hour is
so near,

It is needful that you should our plans at last hear.
In ten minutes hence Father Paul will arrive
To hear your confession, your spirit to shrive,
And to make you without, as doubtless you've been
For a long year; the chaste bride of heaven, within.
And 'tis time that to think upon this you'd begun.

Eulalie. To think of it. Yes. But one moment,
one,

Leave me here to myself. Let me think of the past
Ere I give it up all. For the last time, the last,
Leave me here for these short ten minutes alone.

Sister Regina But, my sister, the world and its follies are gone.

They are all dead to you. Think on holy things now.
'Tis no time to look backward on follies below.

Eulalie. O spare me! And you, you are young.

In the past

Had you never one hope that when perished at last
Left the whole world a desert,—no dream of delight
That when faded enwrapped the whole world in its
night?

Oh! I am young yet, and think of the years
In which I must pour out my whole life in tears,
And only ten minutes left. Leave them to me.

Sister Regina. Well, my sister, be ready. I grant
this to thee.

[*Exit Sister Regina.*]

ACT V.

SCENE.—*A room in the convent.* [*Abbess and Sister Alice.*]

Abbess. But how? when? and where? Who left
her alone?

It cannot be true. Are you sure she has gone?
Gone? Run away with a heretic lover?
The thing with disgrace the convent will cover!
Who left her alone? Who opened the gate?
What was it that made the young friar so late?

Sister Alice. Why, the boy that you sent found the
roads were so rough
That he had to go over them slowly enough.
And just at the corner his horse, taking fright,
Tossed him over the fence, and was off out of sight.
And it took him a long while to catch him again;
And when he did catch him at last, mother, then
He had been gone so long that the friar was late.
And the gardener's son left open the gate,
When he went out to bring in some turnips he'd
bought.

And poor Sister Regina, she certainly thought
Sister Ignatia needed the moments alone
To prepare, and when she went back she was gone,
With herself to blame for it, and nobody else.

SOLOMON GRUNDY.

♦♦ OLOMON Grundy,
Born on Monday,
Christened on Tuesday,
Married on Wednesday,
Sick on Thursday,
Worse on Friday,
Dead on Saturday,
Buried on Sunday:
This was the end
Of Solomon Grundy."

Mother Goose.

Solomon Grundy brief his life.
Born, and christened, and took a wife,
Sick, and ailing, sinking, dead,
Put in the grave and all is said.

What did he do in his fourscore years?
Who keeps record of all the tears

And all the smiles of his babyhood?
Was little Solomon sweet and good?

What did he wear on his christening day?
Nurse and mother have passed away.
None shall tell of the falling lace,
None, how sweet was the baby face.

None remembers all the joy
Of the mother's heart o'er the bonny boy
As little Sol grew tall and strong
And showed that never could he do wrong.

None remembers the bitter pain
When the mother's heart seemed rent in twain,
When little Sol grown strong and tall
Met one day such a dreadful fall.

And the servants screamed, and the doctor came
And bound poor Solomon's bruised frame.
But aching hearts forgot their pain
For Solomon soon was himself again.

Who keeps record of all the years,
Of all the hopes, and of all the fears,
The high ambitions of college days,
The Greek and Latin, the student's praise,

The longing for something, the eager thirst
To drink of the fountain whose waters burst
From the cool green breast of the Helicon.
Where Pegasus drank in days long gone?

Who knows the noble thoughts and true,
Solomon G., that sleep with you?
Under the daisies, under the grass,
You hear no voices, no feet that pass.

Solomon loved a fair-faced bride
Sweeter than aught in the world beside.
Who knows the hopes and the vague unrest
That troubled Solomon's manly breast?

Perhaps he loved, and loving lost,
Perhaps his love was early crossed,

And, sorrowing over a wasted life,
His heart grew stern and he took a wife.

Perhaps the wooing went smoothly on
Till, his sweet betrothal over and done
And a tenderer star shining down on his life,
Solomon Grundy took a wife.

Then came the strife in the world's broad field.
Who shall conquer? and who shall yield?
O Solomon G., did you win the crown
Of a victor there and gain renown?

Or, weary, fainting, sick at heart,
With none to soothe your wound's fierce smart,
Turned you away from the well-fought field,
Unable to conquer, too proud to yield?

Did you bravely bear your failure then
And hide your hurt from the sight of men?
Who shall tell? for under the grass
You hear no voices, no steps that pass.

For Solomon G. grew ill, grew ill ;
The room was darkened, the house was still.
There were bitter tears by the sufferer's bed,
And tender sorrowful words were said.

For Solomon G. grew worse and worse ;
Vain were the efforts of friends and nurse.
When spring was wild with light and bloom
Solomon G. went down to the tomb.

Was there weeping wild in the stricken home
For its stay and prop forever gone ?
Who shall tell? Low under the sod
Solomon Grundy sleeps with God.

“Solomon Grundy” was written in the classroom as an impromptu composition. The teacher gave the Mother Goose lines, which the author had never before heard. Twenty-five minutes were allowed for the composition, and at the end of that time this poem was produced exactly as here given.—ED.

ORIGIN OF THE VALENTINE.

IN a balmy day when the world was young
St. Valentine went wooing ;
For the saint himself was young that day
And his suit was long a-doing ;
So he rode along by field and wood
One line of thought pursuing.

“What shall I do to win, to win,
To win the fair Ignatia?”
And he rang the changes o’er and o’er.
“Ignatia, fair Ignatia.
What shall I try that’s yet untried
To move the fair Ignatia?”

The clouds above him white and still
Went floating by unheeding,
The branches waved in golden light
Unmindful of his pleading,

And a robin red sat all forlorn
As though some counsel needing.

The good saint spoke his mind aloud,—
A way he had of doing.
“What can I do to help me in,
To help me in my wooing?
To win the fair Ignatia
Who’s deaf to all my suing?

Ignatia, Ignatia”—
The robin interrupted.
“I beg your pardon, sir,” he said,
“The world is all corrupted.
I’ll tell you how to win, if you
Will help me when instructed.

The breath of spring is in the air,
In every wind a-blowing,
Yet not a bird will pair, will pair
As though the thing not knowing.
There ’ll not a nest be built, be built
Until we find it snowing.

If you 'll just say it 's balmy spring
And not bleak February—”

[They had another word for Feb.

In those old days and merry,
But I 've forgotten what it is,
A learned name though—very.]

“If you 'll just say it 's balmy spring
I 'll win my mate to-morrow,
And then to aid you in your suit
Such potent help I 'll borrow
You 'll win your fair Ignatia
And rise above your sorrow.”

The good saint said, “In this your plea
I 'll own I 'm interested.
But how can *I* change what is made
And settled and attested?
The power to make a black thing white
In me was never vested.”

“Just say the word,” replied the bird.
“Last week in Jove's own palace

He poured some red wine out and said,
 'There 's white wine in my chalice ;
And furthermore this silver 's gold
 And shall be gold *aut nullus.*' "

The good saint mused. What Jove had done
 A private saint might venture.
"What 's right for Jove is right for me,"
 He thought. That proved a clencher.
At least it led to something else,
 And that, to this adventure.

St. Valentine proclaimed the word.
 He said it really grieved him
The birds should think it chill ; to say
 'Twas balmy spring relieved him.
The birds they shivered in their shoes,
 But every bird believed him.

And robin red he won his mate,
 But, true as thrice-tried armor,
He lingered not, but kept his word
 And left his lovely charmer.

(His deep concern expressing, lest
His absence should alarm her.)

He flew up to the silent sky
Where whitest clouds were flying.
He bore away a fleecy cloud
Where golden light was lying,
Where the Loves had lain in tranced dreams
And perfumed it with sighing.

He twined about it every flower
That blooms by summer river—
The blue Forget-me-not, the white
Star-shaped Love-me-forever.
And then he flew to Cupid's court
To touch it with his quiver.

St. Valentine he mused and mused,—
“What shall I do to woo her?”
When robin red came down and said,
“Just please present this to her
And you will find yourself ere long
A proud and happy wooer.”

The good saint doubted, but he went,
And things divine, before him.
The Loves stooped from out a cloud
Their witchery flung o'er him,
And the valentine the gods had blessed
Did all his wooing for him.

P. S.—Lest some one wise should hint that saints
And Cupids do not tally,
I'll add that when my hero made
This grand, successful sally
He was not yet a saint at all
But simply known as Vally.

DIALECT POEMS.

FRANK DE LEE.

I will tell you of a story
That was told one time to me,
When I dwelt within a far home
By the “murmuring Mexic Sea;”
And my negro nurse told wondrous
Tales of fairies from the deep,
And mermaids stealing lovely girls
To drown them in their sleep.

The solemn pine-trees’ moaning voice
Would mingle with her tale,
And the whip-poor-will with plaintive tone
Take up the mournful wail.
Once, when the light and darkness
Were blending in the air
And a haunted feeling filled the heart
Of childhood unaware,—
While the pine-knot’s ruddy brightness
Flared flickering on the wall,

My old nurse told this story
Of pride, and sin, and fall.

“Mighty hahd and cruel mahstah
Was young Mahstah Frank De Lee.
Such a man as he was, honey,
May youh young eyes neveh see.
He had seven hund’ed people
On his big Red Riveh place,
An’ he owned five hund’ed othehs
Down upon de Bayou Teche.

Dah de big-jawed alligatohs
Swam along de bayou’s banks,
An’ he ’d t’row de leetle child’en
Right among deh hungry ranks.
An’ de whippin’-stocks was drippin’
Wid fresh blood streams all day long,
An’ de very aih was tawtched
Wid de soun’ of screamin’s strong ;
An’ throughout de hull wide region
Ob de Tuckapaw, his name

Was de one de mahstahs used
To make deh lazy niggahs tame.

One day Mahstah Frank went drivin',
Drivin' deeh along de Teche
Wid de blood-houns' ob his trainin';
An' his frien's jined in de chase.
Long dey rode, an' foun' no deehs dah;
Fah dey rode, an' hot de day.
Aftah while young mahstah foun' him
All alone, an' fah away
From his own plantation buildin's
All alone—he knew not whah.
An' de dahk come gloomin' roun' him,
But he could not see a stah.
An' a feelin' come upon him
Ob a Presence by his side,
An' he felt his flesh a-crawlin',
An' his heahrt widin him died.

Through de woods he saw a gleamin',
Through de trees he saw a light,

An' it drawd him tawd it, tawd it,
An' he saw a feahful sight.
Sight no mawtal saw befohe him,
An' no mawtal e'eh will see,
Sight dat broke de cruel sperit,
De hahd heaht of Mahs. De Lee.
He had mawied a young lady,
Miss Helene of Pointe Coupee;
An' she died because heh heaht broke,
An' heh death was sad to see.
But he saw heh, through de trees dah,
Wid heh beautiful pale face.
An' he saw two blood-stained bodies .
He had shot on Bayou Teche.

Ole Judge Lyon's only gran'son,
Twenty-one de day he died,
Wid two bullets in his body
An' a knife-cut in his side.
An' Miss Margy's tall young husban',
Fines' man along de Teche,
Mahs' De Lee had took offence at
An' had shot befohe heh face.

An' he saw de leetle child'en
From de watahs cold arise.
An' dey all weh starin' at him
Wid deh great, dead, glassy eyes.
Long he tried to call fo' help dah,
But he could not make a soun',
Or de win's up in de pine-trees,
His po' callin's must ha' drown'.

No one knows what mo' he saw dah ;
Fo', upon de break of day,
Frien's who had been sahchin' fo' him
Would not take de kawpse away.
Black it was an' chah'd wid fyah,
An', when some one touched his head,
Fyah leaped up from his eyeballs ;
So dey tuhn' an' lef' him—dead.

But his ghos' still walks de woods dah,
Still it leads de hunt an' chase ;
An' his sperit tole dis story
To a man on Bayou Teche.

An' dat man went ravin' crazy,
Neveh had no min' agin.
Dem's de consequences, honey,
Of pehsistin' on in sin."

THE HIGH WATER.

AH'S a place in Pointe Coupee, sah,
Whah de riveh used to flow.
I suppose 't was ten or twenty,
Maybe eighty, yeahs ago.

Uncle Jawge says when he come heah
De ole watah-cawse was full,
An' de new one wasn't dah yet ;
But den Uncle Jawge is ole.

Why, when he come to dis country,
All dese piney woods you sees
Was one wavin' fiel' ob cane-brakes,
Wid a few pehsimmon trees
Scattered in an' out among 'em,
Not a gum-tree in de state.
Mighty scanty 'coons an' 'possums,
Sah, I reckon, at dat rate.

Uncle Jawge tole me de story
Ob de big high-watah yeah
When de riveh's cawse got turned so.
Tell you? Ef you wants to heah.
It was aftah cotton-pickin',
Almost sugah-plantin' time.
Uncle Jawge lived neah de riveh,
An' he says about dat time,
You could see de watah risin',
Risin', risin', high an' strong,
An' de han's was kep' a-workin'
At de levee all night long.

Night an' day dey worked an' worked dah,
Day an' night de watah spread ;
In de dahkness dey could heah it
Lappin roun' de levee head.
Bayou Rouge was ovehflowin'
Oveh on de otheh side ;
An' de Chafalayah Riveh
Was a spreadin' fah an' wide.

On de wes' bank of de riveh
Was de Mahstah's big white house
Wid de niggah quahtahs neah it,
But between was Bayou Bouse.
It was nothin' in de summah,
An' dried up one half de yeah;
But jes' den you couldn't cross it
'Dhout you had a dug-out neah.

So de Mahstah stayed across it
In de ovehseah's place,
An' dey say he got so changed dah
You 'd a hardly knowed his face.
But he stayed out on de levee,
An' de niggahs worked deh bes',
But de watah kep' a-risin',
An' dah wa'n't no time fo' res';
An' de riveh was jes' filled wid
Snags dat come a-rushin' down,
An' got druv into de levee
An' went whirlin' roun' an' roun'.

An' de watah got so swif' dah
Seemed as if mos' any day
It would sweep de whole embankmen'
Of de levee clean away.
But de boys kep' workin', workin',
Day an' night an' all night long,
An' de watah kep' a-risin',
Growin' high an' growin' strong.
All de wes' was full of watah,
Every little branch was high;
All de eas' was ovehflowin'
From the Rouge an' Chafalay.

One day when de Mahstah come dah
Dey seed de levee couldn't las';
But he tole dem up de riveh
Dah had broke a big crevasse,
An' a heap o' men was drowneded.
"So," he said, "dah's dis ting sho',
Dat will take de weight o' watah,
An' you needn't work no mo'

Like you have been." De boys watched him
As he walked off to de branch.
Dey had all guv up deh workin',
Waitin' fo' de boat to launch.

He was sittin' in de dug-out
On de watah ob de Bouse,
An' he called to Uncle Jawge to
Come an' row him to de house.
An' dey say he sot dah smilin'
Lookin' 'crost like he could see
Little Eustace at de window
An' young Mistes Eulalie.

All at once dah come a sudden
Soun', like thundeh in de aih,
An' de watah swep' de levee
Like 'twas straw dat had been dah.
In de bayou rushed de riveh,
In a minute bofe was gone ;
Fo' de bayou was de riveh
An' dey bofe was mixed in one.

Fo' de watah from de riveh
Caught de watah from de Bouse,
Till it seemed like a great ocean
Rollin' down upon de house.

By de time dey heahd dat thundeh
All de house was swep' away ;
'Twa'n't no time to give no ohdehs,
Not a minute fo' to pray.
Dah dey two weh driftin', driftin'
On de riveh big an' wide,
Nothin' near but floatin' pieces,
Snags aroun' on every side.

Uncle Jawge says Mahstah sot dah
White an' still, like he was dead,
Gazin' wid his eyes wide open
On de watah straight ahead.
I suppose dat he was stunned like
Wid de swif'ness of de whole,
An' it seemed as if de watahs
Was a-rollin' o'eh his soul.

It grew dahk aroun', an' still he
 Didn't seem to draw no breff,
An' it felt like floatin' down de
 Valley of de Shade of Deff.
Dah he sot a-gazin', gazin'
 Straight ahead wid starin' eyes,
Till he seed a somethin' neah 'em
 On de watah fall an' rise.

It was Mahstah Eustace's cradle
 Dat had got out from de house,
An' washed up, an' now was floatin'
 Bottom up'ards down de Bouse.
Uncle Jawge says when he seed it
 Dat he jes' throwed back his head
An' slipped down'ards in de dug-out,
 So he guv him up fo' dead.

An' it kep' a-growin' dahkeh.
 Aftah while he seed a stah,
But it looked so white an' awful
 An' it seemed so still an' fah

He was glad de clouds come driftin'
Up de sky an' hid de light ;
But, he says, dah was an awful
Feelin' roun' him all dat night.

Fo' de watah seemed to wispeh
Or to sob like children's cries,
An' when it got light a little
He could see big shinin' eyes
On de watah all aroun' him,
An' the watah flash an' smile,
An' den wispeh, wispeh, wispeh,
Like a little laughin' chile.

Den he seed de day a-dawnin',
Evenin' come an' lef' him dah
All alone upon de haunted
Watah ; den he knowed no mo'.
Dey was picked up by a steamboat
Dat nex' week. But no one knows
What it was dat killed the Mahstah.
Doctoh said de shock, he s'pose.

Uncle Jawge says when de watah
Settled back into its place
Dat it lef' de ole-time channel
Fo' de new one fuhdeh wes',
An' dey called de ole False Riveh.
But he lef' ole Pointe Coupee ;
Couldn't beah to think of Mahstah
An' young Mistes Eulalie.

An' he says fo' long month aftah
Dat he couldn't shet his eyes
But he'd see Mahs' Eustace's cradle
On de watah fall an' rise.
An' he'd heah the watah wispeh,
Whispeh, wispeh, like a chile,
An' he'd see it flash an' quiveh,
An' he'd see it dance an' smile.

So he t'ought he'd leave de country.
Eh sah? What was dat you say?
What became of all de niggahs?
Oh ! sah, dey was swep' away.

JOHN GAIR.

OF EAST FELICIANA.

YOU see, Boss, dat I was presen'
When dey killed John Gaih.
No one knowed, but I was hidin'
In de pine woods dah.

I was out dat night a-huntin'.
Bad night, sah, fo' coon ;
Fo' you see 'twas light as mawnin',
Dah was sech a moon.

I was jes' a-tuhnin' homewahd,
An' my tawch was out,
When I t'ought I heahd a tramplin'
An' a fah-off shout.

Dose was ticklish times, you know, sah,
An' I t'ought I'd hide ;

Dah's no tellin' 'bout de white folks
When dey's out to ride.

Well, de soun' kep' comin' neaheh,
Till dey got in sight ;
Nigh about a hund'ed men, sah,
An' deh guns was bright.

Dey was all full ahmed wid muskets,
Carried pistols too,
An' I couldn't help but wondeh
What dey gwine to do.

I could heah dem all a-talkin,
Plain us you heah me,
An' I foun' dat dey was waitin'
Po' John Gaih to see.

You see, he had been arrested
Down to Baton Rouge,
An' he begged an' prayed de sheriff—
Life is hahd to lose—

Not to take him up to town heah ;
Fo' de folks had said
Ef dey caught him in de parish
Dey would shoot him dead.

So I knowed dat dey was waitin'
Till he pass' dat way.
You could easy tell what den, sah,
An' I tried to pray.

But I couldn't think o' nothin',
As de time went by,
But jes' what a pretty night 't was
Fo' a man to die.

Oh ! I tell you it seemed hahd sah,
To be shot down dead,
Wid de world so white an' shinin'
From de moon o'eh-head.

An' den he was young an' strong, sah,
But de white folks t'ought

'Lecion times would go off betteh
If John Gaih was caught.

Fo' you 'd hahdly fin' a niggah,
Hunt de parish through,
But would follow whah he 'd lead 'em,
An' what he said, do.

Dah I sot an' watched de white men—
I can't tell no names.
Fah off? Well, I knows dat too, sah,
But I tells no names.

Dah was boys not oveh twenty.
I could see dem ride
Roun' an' roun' de tree below me.
An' I sot an' tried

Fo' to pray to God to save him,
Po' John, from dat death;
But I felt so sick an' dizzy
Couldn't get my breath.

Aftah while I heahd a-tramplin',
An' I shuck wid feah.
Well I knowed it was de sheriff
An' de men wid Gaih.

All got still as death aroun' me,
'Cept de hosses' feet
Soundin' neah an' soundin' neaheh,
Like de death-watch beat.

An' dese little quiv'rin' owls, sah,
(Sign o' death, dey say,)
Got to callin' in de pine-trees
Jes' a step away.

Dey come neah, tuhned de corneh.
Den dey was in sight ;
Giah was ridin' in de middle,
Bofe his han's boun' tight.

In a minute dey was roun' him,—
Nigh a hund'ed men.

Dat his time had come fo' dyin'
Gaih was cehain den.

But he gazed aroun' him, prayin'
Dey would save his life.
You see he had little child'en
An' a sickly wife ;

An' it's hahd to die like dat, sah.
But I heahd dem say,
"Too late now, John. Jes' five minutes
Lef' fo' you to pray."

He throwed back his head and stahed up
At de shinin' sky,
An' I knowed dat *he* was thinkin'
What a time to die.

Dah was jes' dat look about him,
In his strainin' eyes,
You have seen a wounded deeh have
Jes' befo' it dies.

Den he drapped down on his knees dah ;
But dey couldn't stay
(Seemed like dey was in a hurry.)
Fo' po' John to pray.

Fo' while he was kneelin' quiet,
Some one shot a gun,
An' I heahd a cry, an' den de
Shots come, one by one.

Seems to me dey must have fihed
Aftah he was gone ;
Fo' I heahd de shots long aftah
I could heah him groan.

Dey made cehtain dey had killed him,
Den dey rid away.
An' I come down and went to him—
It was light as day.

An' I didn't want to see him
Mangled wid de shot ;

But I couldn't help but do it,
Wantin' to or not.

Oh ! ef you had seen him lyin',
All de grasses wet
Wid his blood, as I did, mahstah,
You could not fo'get.

He was riddled wid de bullets,
All shot troo an' troo,
An' his po' dead face was awful
Wet with bloody dew.

An' somehow, as I stood by him—
Face an' head all wet
Wid de red drops—I got thinkin'
Ob de bloody sweat

On de forehead of the Mahstah,
An' I t'ought dat he
Had seen all po' John had suffered
Betteh fah dan me.

An' de blood drops dat was scattehed
 'Neath de shinin' skies,
Like de blood of righteous Abel,
 To de Lord might rise.

THE CARPET-BAGGER.

 E Yankees is curious people,
Dey 's curious people fo' sho',
An' de longeh I lives fo' to see it
De betteh dat knowledge I know.

Back heah, long in Reb-time, folks tole us,
Jes' as sahtain as we all was bawn,
De Yankees had eyes in deh shouldchs,
An' in front of deh heads was a hawn.

Believe it? Why, sahtainly. Yes, sah.
Of cawse, we believe what we's tole.
I reckon you didn't live roun' heah
When I was 'bout twenty yeah ole.

Well, when I fus' look at a Yankee,
I seed he had eyes in his head,
An' I seed he hadn' no hawn dah
As some of de people had said.

But I made up my min' in a minute
De white folks was mighty correc'
In thinkin' de Yankees was curious.
You think dat youhself, sah, I spec'.

Dey hasn't no feelin's of honoh ;
I 've heahd dat from people who knows.
I neveh knowed none but dis one, sah ;
But dey 's all jes' alike, so I s'pose.

Dis one, he was name' Misteh Lawrence,
He seized a plantation fo' debt,
An' de gemman he swohe he would shoot him
De very fus' chance he could get.

An' he call' him a reg'lar gran' rascal,
Right 'fo' de bes' people in town,
An' said de fus' time he could see him
He'd sahtainly shoot him right down.

Of cawse, Misteh Lawrence heahd 'bout it,
But he seem' not to min' in de leas' ;

He jes' had de gemman boun' oveh
By de jestice to keep up de peace.

An' everyone said how low-down 'twas,
An' jes' what a Yankee would do,
Dat had no sensations of honoh ;
But he seemed not to min' dat ah, too.

At fus' he belonged to the Bureau,
He was gettin' on 'bout thihty-five.
I've seed ign'ant people, but he was
De ign'antest pehson alive.

He said aftehnoon, sah, fo' evenin',
An' den he said evenin' fo' night ;
An' long as he live' in de parish
He neveh could leahn what was right.

He was always a-guessin' an' guessin',
He neveh knowed nothin' fo' sho' ;
An' he always kep' callin' me misteh,
Till I tole him my fus' name was Joe.

Den dah 's Peteh dat tole me about him,
Said often an' often he 'd go
An' saddle his own hoss fo' ridin',
Like as ef he 's a niggah, fo' sho'.

He lived heah in town seve'l yeahs, sah.
He was sheriff, an' clehk of de couht;
An' den he was made ovehseeh
Of de schools, an' things of dat soht.

He was jedge fo' awhile in de parish,
An' aasessoh one yeah fo' awhile;
Den somethin' dat paid him fo' ridin'—
It was so many dollahs a mile,

Jes' heah at dis minute I seems, sah,
To be disremem'rin' de name;
But I know dat afteh election
Ole Mahs' Thomson come into de same.

An' I 'm sahtain, when dis Lawrence held it,
Of heahin' Mahs' Thomson declahe

'Twas enough fo' to ruin de country,
An' de office ought not to be dah.

'Long de time, yeah befo' de election,
Dah 'd quite a good many been shot ;
An' I heahd a hull heap of opinions
'Bout some soht or otheh of plot.

An' dis Lawrence got mightily pale, sah ;
An' he neveh went out fo' a ride
But he carried a pistol right heah, sah,
An' one in a belt at his side.

An' one night de white folks, 'bout thihty
Or fohty—about dat in all—
S'rounded de house what he live' in,
An' den fo' Mahs' Lawrence dey call'.

You see he 'd oppressed all de people,
An' deh duty was plain 'fo' deh face ;
So dey went dah dat night fo' to do it,
An' deh chief was to get Lawrence' place.

So dey call', an' de fus' thing dey knowed, sah,
He stood plain in sight in de do',
A pistol in each han', an' fihed
Every barrel in each one, fo' sho'.

Mo' dan dat, he tuk steady aim, sah,
An' de white folks was so tuk aback
Dat he slipped away in de dahkness,
An' dey neveh could light on his track.

Of cawse, dey had mighty big times, sah,
An' all of de people 'roun said :
What a bloody thing 'twas in dat Lawrence,
What a good thing 'twould be ef he's dead.

An' dey talked 'bout de blood-thihsty tyrant,
I remembeh, in church de nex' week,
An' said what an outrage it was, sah,
De strong ones oppressin' de weak.

But dat wa'n't de end of him yet, sah,
You'd a-t'ought he'd a-kep' away den ;

But dah ain't no accountin' fo' some folks
An' one mawnin' he come back again.

De people dat got him away, sah,
Had tuk all his b'longin's of cawse.
Misteh Allen was usin' his dwellin',
An' his brotheh was usin' his hawse.

But what did dis heah Lawrence do, sah,
But get out a bill in de couht
Agains' de bes' men in de parish
Fo' stealin' de goods he had bought.

An' sence de jedge an' de sheriff
Was bofe of 'em 'Publicans den,
Dey had dose dah gemmen arrested
Fo' dat Yankee—de meanes' of men.

He sol' off his house an' his gyahden ;
An' de jedge heah he bought up de hawse ;
An' de white folks was bailed out o' jail, sah,
By deh frien's in de parish, ot cawse.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

SOUTHERN WOODS.

IN wild vast woods of oak and tangled vine
Where the lithe serpent glides o'er rotting leaves
Or coils his sinuous length within the shade
Of the rank nodding ferns ! All living things
That love damp coolness lurk within thy shade
And people thy still depths.

The air dank,
O'erladen with the myriad forest scents,—
The rich breath of the ripening muscadine,
The heavy odor of magnolia flowers,
The perfumes rising from the rich, moist earth,
Which sends the flowers like visible music up
To gladden these still shades.

Each far from each
In glory of their strength the great trees stand ;
While twining vines like twining arms of love
Reach round and bind them strongly each to each,

Commingling leaf and leaf in one close bond
As strong as life, which death alone can part.

And over all,
And mingling with the perfumes in the air,
And mingling with the greenness and the bloom,
Of perfume and of beauty each a part,—
The voiceless music of the whispering woods.
One moment, and it seems that all is still,
The winds are hushed ; and, wrapped in ecstasy,
The leaves are slumbering on each slumbering tree.
A spell of silence broods o'er all. But list !
Far off the singing voices of the winds
Come swelling, swelling, till their murmur grows
To one glad burst of overflowing sound
That gushes round and o'er the swaying leaves
Like water rippling o'er a bed of ferns.

MISTLETOE.

A SONG of the mistletoe bough I sing.
She dwells in a home of eternal spring.
The tall trees whisper, "O come unto me!
And deep in my heart shall your sweet home
be."

For dainty and fair is the mistletoe bough,
And well do her beauty the great trees know.
She cometh, the mistletoe bough.
Her step is light as the breezes blow,
And the sound of her coming is soft and low.
She cometh, she cometh, the mistletoe bough.
She sleepeth soft in the great tree's heart.
No sound can sever her dreams apart.
And low and soft is the amorous tune
Which the fond old trees so tenderly croon.
And loving and soft and dainty and deep
Are the dreams she dreams as she lies asleep,
The dreaming mistletoe bough.
Low and tender the fond winds blow

Their whispering voices are soft and low
 As they hush the dreaming mistletoe bough.
Oh the mistletoe bough to warm life wakes !
'Tis the voice of love that her slumber breaks ;
And the food of her life is the heart-blood warm
Of the staunch old tree that shields her from harm.
Oh ! the food of her life is the heart-love strong
Of the brave old tree whose tender song
 Once stilled to sleep the mistletoe bough.
 The wakened, the loving, the mistletoe bough,
 Her whispering murmur is soft and low,
 Yet well she loveth—the mistletoe bough.
Though cold be the winter and dark as a storm,
The sheltering arms wrap her closely and warm.
Though Winter, the ice and the cold snows bring
Forever she dwells in eternal spring,
 The dainty mistletoe bough.
 The voice of her song is tender and low.
 The thought of her heart none ever can know
 Save the lovers that kiss 'neath the mistletoe
 bough.

CEDAR AND PINE.

 H! list to a sorrowful song
Of the sorrowful cedar and pine.
They are proud they are strong,
Their voice a song,
And the breath of their lips is like wine.

They dwell in the beautiful north.
They dwell in the beautiful south.
And they gather the snows
Where the icy wind blows
And they gather the sun in the south.

'Neath the snows of the beautiful north,
'Neath the sun of the beautiful south,
They shiver with pain
In the chill icy rain
And they shiver with pain in the south.

The best song they know is a sigh,
Their saddest no mortal can frame.
But their voice is a wail
In the chill northern gale
And their song in the south is the same.

DECORATION DAY.

 SONG of the past. A song for the brave.
Lo ! over the land sweeps the battle's red
wave.
Who go forth to battle for the right and the
truth
In the first flush of life, and the first pride of youth ?
Ye have seen them, ye know them, your brothers,
your sons,
Through their veins 't is your own blood so hotly
that runs.

'Tis the land of your fathers whereon they now
tread,—

The land for whose freedom your fathers have bled.

Above them the banner that floats on the air,
Lo ! the stars of the Union and stripes are all there.
It was borne through the battle's wild turmoil and
strife

When the country we love first struggled to life.

' It has gleamed o'er wild prairies and lone mountain
gorge.

It cheered the brave spirits in dark Valley Forge.
It has waved o'er the wild heights of fair Tennessee,
And seen o'er New England the tired British flee.

But the strife waxes fierce, the strife waxes sore.

Sure never were foemen so gallant before.

Nay, for from the same land have the enemy come.

In their long ago childhood they shared the same
home.

Brothers all. Brothers all. And the strife waxes sore.

Is the end yet at hand? Do the foemen give o'er?

Through the dark cloud of battle look forth on the
field.

Is the end yet at hand? Do the enemy yield?
A shout as of victory comes from the host.
A wail from the dying on the wild winds is tossed.
And woe to the mothers whose sons nevermore
Shall return to the arms that enclosed them of yore.
And woe to the widows who long, long shall mourn
For those who went forth nevermore to return.
And woe to the country whose bravest and best
On the red soil of battle have fallen to rest.

A shout as of triumph! The struggle is done.
The smoke clears away. The battle is won.
Oh! red, red with blood is the land that ye love,
But the flag of the Union still floateth above.
Loud and long peals the song of the nation's acclaim.
But where are the soldiers who bled for her fame?

A song of the past, yet the tale is not said.
Lo! my song of the past is a dirge for the dead.
For, O weary mourners, no more, nevermore
Shall ye see the dear faces ye greeted of yore.

Down low in the fenlands where the wild cypress
waves

Have the loved of your spirits gone down to their
graves.

There no tears save the tears of the night dews are
wept,

There no watch save the watch of the night winds
is kept.

There no flowers are strewn on the desolate sod,
But the asters shall bloom and the wild golden rod.
The wild woodland flowers shall deck them in spring
And the winds shall forever their requiem sing.

A song of the present. Bring flowers to strew
The graves of the brave, the gentle, the true.
Bring the roses of love and the lilies of peace,
And mingle their bloom with the fragrant heart's-
ease.

Let the flowers of remembrance be scattered to-day,
Alike on the graves of the blue and the gray.
They sleep on the soil for whose freedom they died.
The victor and vanquished lie low side by side,

And above them the banner that floats on the air,
Lo! the stars of the Union, and stripes are all there.
Keep it free! Keep it free! They have left it to you
With their hearts' blood upon it—the gentle and
true.

ALL-MERCIFUL LOVE.

 AM trying as I sit here,
Dear Lord of eternity,
To think how thou in thy greatness
Canst care for one like me.

For the years that are many and fleeting,
And more than a man can name,
Pass slowly on in their courses
And thou art always the same.

And men with their cares and troubles,
Their joys and their clam'rous woe,

Live, strive, and sin before thee,
And then, with the years, they go.

Always with their upturned faces,
They call to thee 'mid their cares.
Thou growest not weary of hearing,
Thou never art deaf to their prayers.

But it seems to my human nature
The strangest of wondrous things
That thou in thy infinite greatness
Canst care for the little things.

For the sober, brown, little sparrows
That chirp on the garden wall,
For the child asleep in the shadows
That around his cradle fall ;

Ay, even the brown, little sparrows
Or the birds in the maple tree,
Ay, even the child in the shadows,
And even thou carest for me.

And *that* is the strangest of all things
I think as I muse to-day,
For my heart is full unto breaking
With a sorrow I cannot say.

For I sin and wander from thee
And oft into evil fall.
How canst thou care for one like me,
Although thou carest for all?

Yet I feel a sense of thy mercy
Into my spirit steal,
A sense of thy infinite mercy
And love so true and so real.

And I pray this one prayer always
For myself, for those I love,
Dear Saviour, help us to serve thee here
And to meet thee there—above.

TRUST.

SOMETIMES when I'm very tired
Of myself, to myself I say,
Now I am very foolish,
But I may be wise some day.

Some day in the far-off future
When this dark hair is gray,
When my eyes are dull with sorrow
Oh! I may be wise that day.

When my brow is lined with trouble
And my cheek is thin and pale
And the brave young strength of springtime
In my winter begins to fail.

But I sit and smile in the sunshine
Though the clouds rise dark and dun.
I look not before to the tempest,
I sit and smile in the sun.

Though I grow old and older
And much that I loved is dead,
Though, if I stop to listen,
I can hear the ghostly tread

Of the silent years go past me ;
Yet I cannot seem to feel
Any more than a child does
That pain and death are real.

I look out into the future
And no pathway there I see
But I know however I wander
That God will care for me.

And whether I walk thro' the shadows
Or whether I walk thro' the light
Why should my heart be careful ?
I cannot but go aright.

I never entered the shadow
But the shadow came to an end ;
I never was very lonely
But God gave me a friend.

Life, death, and the far-beyond-me
Are shut away from my eyes.
I do not care to know them.
I do not want to be wise.

Let us live, and be glad in the sunshine,
Glad in the light of the skies,
Glad in the wide earth's beauty,
And let us not seek to be wise.

EIGHTEEN.

BUT eighteen summers have passed me by,
And I am too young to grieve.
Though my love has come and my love has
gone,
There are joys that loss can leave.

The sky is as blue above my head,
And the grass beneath my feet

Is as green as it was two summers ago
When the dream of my life was sweet.

The flowers have just that innocent look,
Heart full of the springtime's soul,
They wore when he stooped to pluck them for me
Where our stream's bright waters roll.

And those waters move as clear and bright
With as soft melodious flow
As they did when we wandered together there
Two long, bright summers ago.

The maple trees in their living green
Are as fair unto my eyes
As when opened between their stately ranks
A vista of paradise.

Why should I sit and grieve to-day
For the dead and beautiful past,
For the vanishing light of a tender dream
Whose glow was too bright to last?

If there is a grave within my heart
Why may not that grave be fair?
It is planted o'er with forget-me-nots,
And there 's heart's-ease blooming there.

I am content with my life to-day.
I am too young to weep.
The flowers bloom and the warm sun shines
And the laughing waters leap.

THE SCHOOL MISTRESS.

I STOOD beside the window
And my heart was o'er the sea,
A-sailing with my lover,
Who had sailed away from me ;
And the tears kept coming, coming,
Though I tried to keep them back ;
For the fierce west wind was blowing
And the sky was wild and black.

There came a step behind me,
A hand was on my hair,
And my heart 'gan beating, beating,
For I knew not who was there.
Oh! my heart 'gan beating, beating;
For I thought it might be he—
My bonny, gallant lover
Who had sailed away from me.—
But 't was the poor school mistress
Who had been a friend to me.

She had a tender manner,
For she had sorrowed too.
She kissed me very softly
As my mother used to do;
Till I forgot the west wind
And the wild, dark sea,
And the fickle, faithless lover
Who had sailed away from me.
For I thought of all the trouble
That had come to her sweet heart;
How the cruel hand of sorrow
Had rent her hopes apart,

And I sat a-dreaming, dreaming
Of what my life would be
If I lost the poor school mistress
Who had been a friend to me.

Oh my bonny, gallant lover !
I cannot quite forget
All the happy, happy hours
Of the vanished summers yet.
But my bonny, gallant lover
He sailed across the sea.
And 'tis the poor school mistress
Who has been a friend to me.

I had a sunny vision
Of a castle great and fair
All built of gold and jewels
And founded on the air.
And I had, to enter thither,
A bright enchanted key
All made of shining jewels
That the fays had given me.

I went into a country
Where were robbers fierce and strong.
They took away my vision
And the castle of my song.
They banished all the fairies,
And they stole the golden key,
And there was none to pity
And none to comfort me.

I sat down in my sorrow
In that dark and dreary land,
And the little poor school mistress
Came and took me by the hand.
And she soothed me in my trouble
Very kind and tenderly,
Till I ceased to mourn my castle
And its bright enchanted key.

My bonny, gallant lover,
He sailed away from me.
My fair enchanted castle
I never more shall see.

But I know however dreary
My future lot may be
The little poor school mistress
Will be a friend to me.

A FRAGMENT.

IF thou would'st feel the glory of the night
And have her beauty sink into thy soul,
Keep thou thy spirit free from earthly dross
And yield thee not to sin's unclean control.

In holy meditation pray thy God
To purge thy soul from every sinful stain ;
Then wander 'neath the stars, the holy stars,
And bow thee down, and know that life is vain.

Life is vain. Oh but to spurn away
This vail of flesh, and rise on wings of light

To yon far stars, yon bright and holy stars
That gleam upon the misty veil of night !

Come, O ye night winds, come and lay your hands,
Your hands of benediction soft and light
Upon my brow and draw my soul more near
The hushed and mystic beauty of the night.



INDIAN PIPE.

INDIAN PIPE.

ONCE over a beautiful garden,
All radiant with color and bloom,
Where the winds were laden with fragrance,
And the air was faint with perfume,

A flame in devouring anger
And pitiless passion swept ;
And low in the graves of their brightness,
The beautiful flowers slept.

And there on a sweet summer morning,
When the ashes were sodden with rain,
An Indian pipe stood uplifting
Its head o'er the desolate plain.

Alone in its motionless beauty.
Amid all that blackness, so white,
Like a pure, bright star on the bosom
Of a troubled and murky night—

A delicate spring-like flower,
So waxen, one wondered almost
Whether it really were substance
Or only a hyacinth's ghost.

The dream of a flower, down-fallen
From one of the white clouds on high,
Once blooming with myriad others
In the wide-spreading fields of the sky.

A fair flower saint who had shrived her,
And freed her from passion and pain,
And apart from the world in her cloister,
Kept her garments of life free from stain.

A sad flower, telling a story
Of pain with its sweet woodland breath ;
A glad flower, whispering softly
Of good, and of life out of death.

A beautiful flower to teach us
A lesson of patience and trust,

Like a white soul unsullied by trial,
Unsoiled by earth's dimness and dust.

Like the light that shall shine out of darkness,
Like the good that from evil shall come,
Like a finger of light pointing upward,
Straight up to the heavenly dome.

IF you held your hand to me,
Standing closely by my side
Saying, "Darling, come to me
Be my own and live with me."

I'd not lay my hand in yours, though you stood here
by my side.

Our life paths lie far apart.
Spite of grief and spite of pain,

236 *If You Held Your Hand To Me.*

Though I felt within my heart
Great hot tears of anguish start,
You and I walk not together, spite of grief and
spite of pain.

Listen to me far away,
Soul of him I used to love,
Grieving, well I know, to-day
For a time gone by for aye,
Grieving for the false one whom you used to love.

Can you hear my whisper low
In the far away south-land ?
Does your heart beat fast and slow
At a sound you used to know,
At the murmur of a whisper in the far south-land ?

Listen ! I am false 'tis shown ;
Well you know it by that sigh.
But, if all were fully known,
Would you deem me cold as stone ?
Yes : you deem me false and trait'rous by that weary
sigh.

If You Held Your Hand To Me. 237

Listen ! fleeting years may go
Joy and gladness bring to me,
Bring they joy or bring they woe
Joy like that I used to know
Comes no more on earth for me, heartsick, weary me.

From my hand I took your ring,
Poor hand thus left desolate.
If another love should bring
Other ring more glittering
Still my hand and I forever are ungemmed and
desolate.

Do you hear me, lover mine,
Where the balmy breezes blow ?
By the fragrant jasmine vine
Do you lonely sit and pine
For a breath to match in sweetness fragrance of the
long ago ?

I am very false to you.
Yet the days will sometimes find

238 *If You Held Your Hand To Me.*

Something very fond and true
In my heart, a dream of you.
This is all the coming days will ever find.

Soul of him I used to love,
Do you ever fondly dream
Of the nights when clear above
Shone the moonbeams, and our love
Made the whole wide world unto us an enchanted
dream?

Do you dream of moments bright
Gone away to come no more?
All alone you sit to-night.
Love has faded and love's light
Has gone out to shine for us, dear, never, never
more.

Listen, far away, to me,
Soul of one I used to love,
Think a tender thought of me,
Though my faith so slight may be,
Think one tender thought to-night of her you used
to love.

FLOWERS.

THE life the flowers live
Is a life of light and bloom,
Of dreams of glory tangled
In meshes of perfume.

The love the flowers know
Is a love of rare delights,
Of fervid sun-god kisses,
Of solemn star-lit nights,
Of splendor, wealth, and beauty,
Of glory passing thought,
With evanescent sweetness,
And weird enchantment fraught.

The death the flowers die
Is a falling into sleep,
When the sunlight dreams to moonlight
And all light to darkness deep.

And the dew, oh the dew !
Like a tender blessing falls,
And the earth, oh the earth !
Like a tender lover calls.

A STORM.

 HE sun kissed the water,
And a cloud flew away,
White as a snow-flake
Or as storm-driven spray.

Fair as the mountains
Of the still land of dreams,
Beautiful as woven
Of the white moonbeams.

The storm king arose
In his strength and pride ;

Whispered to the cloud sprite,
"Come, be my bride."

Into his arms she floated,
Kiss of the sun,
How danced the merry rain
Ere day was done !

A PRAYER.

FATHER, the twilight gathers close around me,
The way is long and dim, I cannot see.
The sun of hope is setting and the night tide
Comes stealing o'er the dull earth silently.

Throughout the hours of sorrow long and dreary
Which wait before the coming of the day,
My heavenly Father, be thou ever near me,
Let thy sweet starlight brighten round my way.

I know that o'er the hills in glaring splendor
The sun may rise into my eager ken—
That many a happy day in the far future
May gleam above my sad life once again.

But while the night her lonely watch is keeping
Let moonbeams o'er me shed their quivering light,
Until the silvery glimmer of their presence
Be merged into the infinite of light.

THE EMPTY NEST.

WOULDEST thou know the infinite pathos of life
Behold it here.
These leaves that were once so fresh and green
Are brown and sere.

And the nest where the baby birds once slept
'Neath the wings of love
Is open to every storm that blows
From the skies above.

Once what twittering life was here,
 Now far away,
When here in the shadows the birdies sang
 Through the warm spring day ;

Building deftly with dainty care
 The little nest,
Telling their stories of love, and hope
 Of the summer's best,

Singing their songs till the world was glad
 With their winsome joy,
When earth was fair and when love was young
 And without annoy.

Here in the shadows the baby birds
 Woke into life one day.
Here they twittered and chattered and talked
 All the summer away.

Hence, when their wings were grown, they flew,
 Whither none know.
And the poor little nest is open to day
 To storms that blow.

II

I know a home that lies in the land
Of the wide, dim past,
Where the shadows of years that have passed away
Are around it cast.

Here in a chamber old and wide
A cradle stands
Once swung too and fro in the olden time
By loving hands.

Here in the downy depths within
Was the baby laid,
Here in the pillow is the impress still
Of the baby head.

Once what wonderful life was here,
Now far away,
When the baby laughed and cooed and smiled
Through the summer day.

Here in the rooms the children played
 'Neath the smiles of love ;
Hence they have wandered, wide and far,
 Through the world to rove.

III

Never more will these leaves grow green,
 Now brown and sere ;
Never again will the birdies come
 That builded here.

But other leaves will as freshly grow
 Another spring,
And above in the shadows other throats
 Will as blithely sing.

And none will remember, none will grieve
 For what is gone.
The present with all its wealth is here,
 The past is done.

Oh empty, pitiful nest ! my eyes
Are dim with tears.
Oh lonely home still fair with the light
Of vanished years !

The days go by, and all things fade
With the fading years
Into the land of forgetfulness.
What worth are tears ?

+

DEAD LOVE.

SITTING beside my early dead
With folded hands and drooping head
And heart slow throbbing in its pain,
I think upon the dead of Nain.

I know, O God, that it is sin
To pray for life to enter in

This still, cold form that lieth here
All white and wan upon its bier.
O God, I seek not to complain :
My dead is not the dead of Nain.
And yet I think how brightly ran
The quickened blood when life began
To pulse along each sluggish vein
Of him who long in death had lain.
How softly up his cheek there stole
The flush of the awaking soul,
As rosy light illumines the skies
Soon as the day begins to rise.
Such vision soothed her spirit's pain
Who wept beside her dead in Nain.
I think of it and cannot pray
To see the breaking of the day
Across the darkness of my pain.
My dead is not the dead of Nain.

My dear, despised, early dead,
Above thee never tears are shed.
I crush my own back whence they came
For every drop proclaims my shame.

Yet, if I dared, would prayer be vain ?
The dead was raised of old in Nain.

My dead, my child, my life, my soul,
In that thou diest, there dies the whole
Of life, or light, or love for me.
What other joy had she of old
Who, wild with sorrow uncontrolled,
Walked weeping in the funeral train
That passed through the gates of Nain ?

I can but dream that in thine eyes
I see the wakened life arise.
I can but think of what thou wert
Soft-nestling on my tender heart.
I cannot pray amid my pain
That thou shouldst wake like him in Nain.

A HAUNT.

WHERE the sunbeams quiver
O'er the woodland mould,
Where the breezes shiver
Through the tree-tops old,

Fragrant boughs magnolian,
Whisp'ring boughs of pine,
Like some harp æolian
Breathe a voice divine.

Something sweet and holy
Wraps the place around,
Tender melancholy
Lingers in each sound.

In the forest olden,
When the day is low,
When the sunbeams golden
Quiver ere they go,

Mem'ry, softly breathing
Tender thoughts of yore,
Brings back many an evening
That will come no more.

Spot where sweetest fancies
Blossomed long ago,
Home of bright romances
Fleet to come and go,

Wrapped in tender visions
Brought by spirits three
From the fields elysian
Long ago to me,—

Fairest be thy flowers
Of the summer's bloom ;
Peaceful be thine hours
In the forest gloom.

A SUNSET.

IT was long ago.

Soft sunset light shone over earth and sea.
The east was rosy-tinted like the past.
The west was red with glory like the days
That are to be ; and now the day was done.
Far up the shining west an angel's hand
Had open flung the gates of Paradise,
Letting the light of heaven steal softly through
To paint the glow of heaven upon the sky ;
Purple and red and broadly gleaming gold,
The light of jasper and of amethyst,
Till the stars shone, each several star one pearl.
And the moon floated up the far horizon
All white and wan with dreaming holy dreams,
Drifting from some enchanted land beyond,
The spell of that enchantment still upon her,
Wrapping a misty veil about her face
That she might dream the better in that cloud.

The tossing sea
On many a flashing billow caught the light
And wore it for a diadem awhile ;
And, surging upward toward the far still moon,
The treasure she had given clasped closer still
And changed it into pearls that hid away
In the deep bosom of the heaving main.
Wide were the heavenly gates above the sea ;
And whispering through them came a gentle spirit,
Soft-sighing zephyr breathing o'er the sea,
Laden with balm from heaven's healing shore,
Kissing the earth with benison of peace.

The whispering winds
Came from the plains, laden with incense clouds
From the far forest temples where they'd lingered.

All around was still ;
Save that, afar, within those forest temples
The pines were chanting low their evening hymn.

PAST AND FUTURE.

A LOFT we'll fly on the wings of the wind,
With never a thought of those behind.
The land we leave is black with night.
Before us spread the realms of light,
Where rosy clouds float over the sky
And rosy waters beneath them lie.
Oh waters kissed to a tender glow
By the clouds above them that stoop so low !
Oh waves that bloom like a splendid flower,
Into red or white, in sun or shower !
But every shower is a golden rain ;
For heaven is in love with hill and plain,
And every drop on bud or tree
Repeats the story of Danae.
O'er hill and hollow, away and away,
The wild winds fly and never stay.
Behind us the land is black with night,
Before us stretch the realms of light.

But the moonlight shines, and the soft stars glow,
And the hushed white waters softly flow,
When night comes down with darkness deep
And hushes the world to dreamy sleep.

LOUISIANA.

1877.

OULDST thou see Louisiana?
By the “murm’ring Mexic Sea”
Lonely and sad and desolate
And beautiful sits she.

Her heart is sore with many wounds,
Her eyes are dim with tears.
She counts her losses o’er and sees
No hope in coming years.

Her hands have lost their scepter proud;
Her brow, its diadem.

There 's blood upon her fair white feet
And on her garment's hem.

There 's silence on her borders.
No voice of man is heard ;
Only the chanting of the pines
Or song of forest bird.

There 's strife within her cities.
Want sitteth at her gate.
Behold her house unto her
Is left most desolate.

Her orange groves are many,
Her cotton fields are fair,
And proudly float the tresses
Of her canes upon the air.

But a viper 's in her bosom,
A blight, upon her brow.
How are the mighty fallen !
The beautiful laid low !

And so Louisiana,
By the "murm'ring Mexic Sea,"
Sits clothed about in garments fair ;
But who so sad as she ?

THE DEATH ANGEL.

AZRAEL Angel of Death.
His pinions are white as the snow ;
His eyes are as dark as life's eclipse.
He gathers our souls with a kiss of his lips,
Then we sigh not for long ago.

O beautiful Angel of Death !
What a light in those mystical eyes !
When it shines on our souls all troublings cease
And their waters lie still as the River of Peace
In the Garden of Paradise.

There's a vale where the Angel of Death
 To welcome our spirits stands ;
There the shadows are lying so still and deep
And silence and beauty forever sleep,
 In the mystical Border Lands.

The Valley is calm and still ;
 The Shadow is cool and deep.
After the tumult, the noise, and the blare ;
After life's long turmoil, and light, and glare,
 'Tis sweet in that vale to sleep.

PARTING.

LET me rest once more upon thy heart.
 'T is the last time, beloved, 't is the last.
Even on thy breast how slowly, slowly beats
 My heart that in the old days beat so fast.

Let me once more lie close within thy arms,
Let me once more feel thy soft kisses' breath ;
For there will be no loving arms to hold me,
Nor loving kisses in the night of death.

I shrink back from the darkness of the shadow ;
For you are here and I must go alone,
And you will hunger so with eager longing
To see my face again when I am gone.

And then when all your heart is sick with longing,
Soft eyes of love will shyly look at you,
And haunt you in the dark-time and the light-time,
And you will vainly struggle to be true.

And then, I know, the effort will grow fainter,
And sweeter grow the music of her tone ;
And after while you 'll give your sweet love to her,
The tender, strong love that once was my own.

Beloved one, forgive these foolish tear-drops.
Forgive me ; love me ; 't is the last, last time.

Forever in my ears I hear the mingling
Of moaning funeral-knell and wedding-chime.

Oh I am very weak ! and it grows darker.
Oh love me, love me, love me more and more !
Oh hold me closer ! for I hear the dashing
Of icy waves upon an icy shore.

ABSOLVO TE.

I

IN a vast cathedral dim and old
A maiden knelt in her sorrow cold,
Telling her sin with sigh and tear
And grief it was pitiful to hear.
Till the priest stooped low, and tenderly
Whispered to her, " Absolvo te."

II

Dear Saviour, here at thy feet I lie,
And the outside world with its pomp goes by.
I wait and listen with eager ear
The words of peace and life to hear.
Answer, my Saviour, speak to me,
Say to my soul, Absolvo te.

III

I ask not for gifts of wealth and ease,
For the vain, sweet things that mortals please.
I even ask not to lie on thy breast
And taste the bliss of thy perfect rest.
But I pray thee, my Saviour, speak to me,
Say to my soul, Absolvo te.

IV

I lie at thy feet, I will not go.
I will wait for thy blessing even so.

Thou wilt not send me empty away ;
For thy God-spirit broke for me one day.
Then answer me, Saviour, speak to me,
Say to my soul, Absolvo te.

V

“Absolvo te,” and I ’m white from sin ;
Into thy grace I may enter in.
“Absolvo te,” and the mighty God
In my mortal soul shall make abode.
I wait, I wait, O speak to me !
Say to my soul, Absolvo te.

VI

Absolvo te. The world is wide,
But its joys can never my sorrows hide.
Thou alone canst give me release,
Thou hast the gift of eternal peace,
Answer me, Saviour, speak to me,
Say to my soul, Absolvo te.

VII

I am thine own, thou liv'st for me ;
I am thine own, thou lovest me.
Holy thou art, but thy life didst give
That sinful souls might forever live,
And thy blood that was shed for all, for me,
Answereth for thee, "Absolvo te."

DOUBTS.

AN angel came from the sky one day
And whispered, "Peace be to thy soul."
I sat by the ocean and watched the waves
Sweep in with their surging roll,
And a strange, sweet peace came after the words
To brood o'er my troubled soul.

I watched the billows come sweeping in
Crested with foam caps white.

The sky was far, the words were gone,
The salt spray dimmed my sight.
How do I know that the angel spake?
Or I heard his words aright?

THE BABY.

YOU have heard how the gate of dreamland
Lies near to the gate of day.
Our baby was going to dreamland
And he wandered and lost his way.

The gate of dreams is of crystal,
And golden the gate of light.
We thought he had gone to dreamland,
But he went up to heaven in the night.

He smiled in his sleep, and we whispered,
“What do the angels say?”
We thought him in dreamland, when gone
To heaven thro’ the gates of day.

I weep

For one who shrank from treading the stern and
towering steep,
And turned into the valleys where the smiling waters
leap.

I pray

For one who walks in sunlight on a broad and
pleasant way
Where are flowery meadows smiling to welcome feet
that stray.

I smile

For one who lingered with us but a short and sunny
while,
And in heaven with the angels keeps his spirit free
from guile.

God sees my tears,
God hears my prayers,
God loved the little child
And kept him undefiled.

WEAVING.

WHAT kind of a woof doth the maiden weave,
Weave in her sunlit dreams,
While in and out of the shining web
The sparkling shuttle gleams,
And the yellow light of her hair so bright
In a golden glory streams?

She weaves a dainty and delicate web
Of bud and flowery bloom,
With warp of fancy and filling of love
All woven in beauty's loom,
With a sunny shine in the web divine
As it comes from beauty's loom.

What kind of a woof do the weird Fates weave
 In their solemn silence cold?
Dread is the silence ; dark, the web,
 And the shuttle, rough and old.
What do they weave that the angels grieve
As they bend down to behold?
Forever and ever, they weave and weave
 In cold and quivering gloom,
With warp of sorrow and filling of woe
All woven in life's dark loom,
With tangled threads in somber webs
 That only suit the tomb.

But the shining angels weave a woof
 Fragrant with rare perfumes
With warp of trial and filling of love
 All woven in heavenly looms.
And Fate's dark thread or youth's bright web
 Before it fades and glooms.

LOVE.

THE soul stands silent and voiceless,
Its power unknown, unguessed,
Till the touch of love awakes it
And calls it from its rest ;
As the sighing voice of Æolus,
Sweeping from o'er the sea,
Wakes the lonely silent wind-harp
Unto perfect melody.

The soul that has felt love's beauty
And has seen that beauty die
Can never again at its summons
Awake to a sweet reply ;
As the harp when its chords are broken
Is silent forevermore,
Though Æolus sweep in his power
Up from the dim sea shore.

THE RING.

YOU have lasted long, bright band of gold,
Though the love that gave you 's dead and
cold,
And the hand that wore you 's bought and sold,
And the fair, fleet days that came of old
Have passed away like a tale that 's told.

Bright as of old you glitter here,
Undimmed by the breath of many a year
That was carried away on its funeral bier,
When winds of winter were wild and drear,
When leaves of winter were sad and sere.

Hands which trembled when you were new ;
Lips that vowed so true, so true ;
Cheeks that blushed with the warm, sweet hue
Of red June roses for you, for you ;
How changed ! how changed since you were new !

Hands that clasped are far apart.
Sundered wide is heart from heart.
That which was made of the jeweler's art
Is stronger than that of the human heart,
And the ring will shine though lovers part.

GONE.

A HUNGER and thirst for a sight of my darling,
The flying gold gleam of her beautiful hair,
The smile that enthralled me, the voice that
enchained me,
The fall of her light foot on floor or on stair.

I long for the beautiful bride of my spirit,
The soul of my soul who will never be mine,
Who grew weary of earth and the world's winsome
wooing,
And one day went higher to taste the divine.

She rose in her beauty from earth's dark enfolding,
From grave dust to wander in heaven's high halls.
But my heart, in her own held, lies under the grasses,
And never will rise until Death to me calls.

Till Death whispers, "Here in the warm earth is
 waiting
A home that is narrow and silent and deep ;
Come, dwell in this house I have fashioned to hold
 you
And drink the deep draught of Lethean sleep."

MELUSINA.

♦♦ **L**ISTEN, my children, listen,
 To the voice of the wild salt sea."
 " Oh ! we hear it calling, calling,
 And the gleam of its waves we see.

Come up from the wild salt water.

We are cold and wet in the spray,
And the sea is calling, calling,
Calling our lives away.

O sing us a song of the sunshine
That falls upon flowers and trees,
Until we forget the billows
And the swell of the surging seas.

And loosen, loosen your tresses,
All yellow and shining and fair.
O sing us a song of the sunshine
While we tie up your shimmering hair."

The lady unfastened her tresses
Till they fell in a flood to her knee,
But the bright golden hair as she loosed it
Fell shimmering green like the sea.

Oh ! the lady sang of the sunshine,
But the children shrank from her knee ;

For the musical sound of her singing
Was the rippling voice of the sea.

“O listen, listen, my children !
Shrink not away in fear.
List to the ocean voices
And tell me all that ye hear.

Look over the shining waters
And tell me all that ye see.
And kiss me, kiss me, children ;
And will ye remember me ?”

“O tell us where thou art going !
The waves rise up to thy knee.
O tell us where thou art going
Away on the cold false sea !”

“Out on the rippling waters
I am going far away ;
For the sea is calling, calling
To my heart, and I cannot stay.”

A VALENTINE.

IF I were a leaf on a tree,
And you were the wind from the west,
Would you waft me away in your strong
embrace?

And pillow my head on your breast?

If you were the sun in his strength,
And I were a morsel of dew,
Would you lift me away from my low estate?
And carry me nearer you?

If you were a king in the east,
Should I, in the east, be a queen?
Should I sit by your side on a throne of gold
All sparkling with diamond sheen?

Should I dwell in an ivory palace
With odors of musk in my hair,
While a tall eastern king should lie at my feet
And music should fill the air?

If you were the king among men,
And only my love were mine,
Would you single me out from all maidens on earth
To choose me your valentine ?

FLOWERS.

FOR March the violets come,
For April, daffodillies.
May and June the roses bloom,
In July the lilies.
In August comes the golden rod,
Asters, in September.
In October leaves grow red
And fall off in November.
Then the flowers go to sleep
In their warm earth-houses.
Every one through all the long
Winter snow-time drowses.

But when spring comes, up they start,
Stretch their hands a minute,—
“Time to do our summer’s work,
Violets, you begin it.”

SONNET TO KEATS.

A POET whose great soul shrank back from death
Seeing the mighty things of life so well,
Longing to leave upon all time the spell
And power of thine own poetic breath
Breathing itself into such forms that Death
Should have no power to weaken or dispel
Their fair immortal life! Though darkness fell
So early on thy eyes and hushed thy breath,
I hold thee blessed beyond compare
That thus, while all thy life was in its prime,
Ere came the weakness or the cold despair

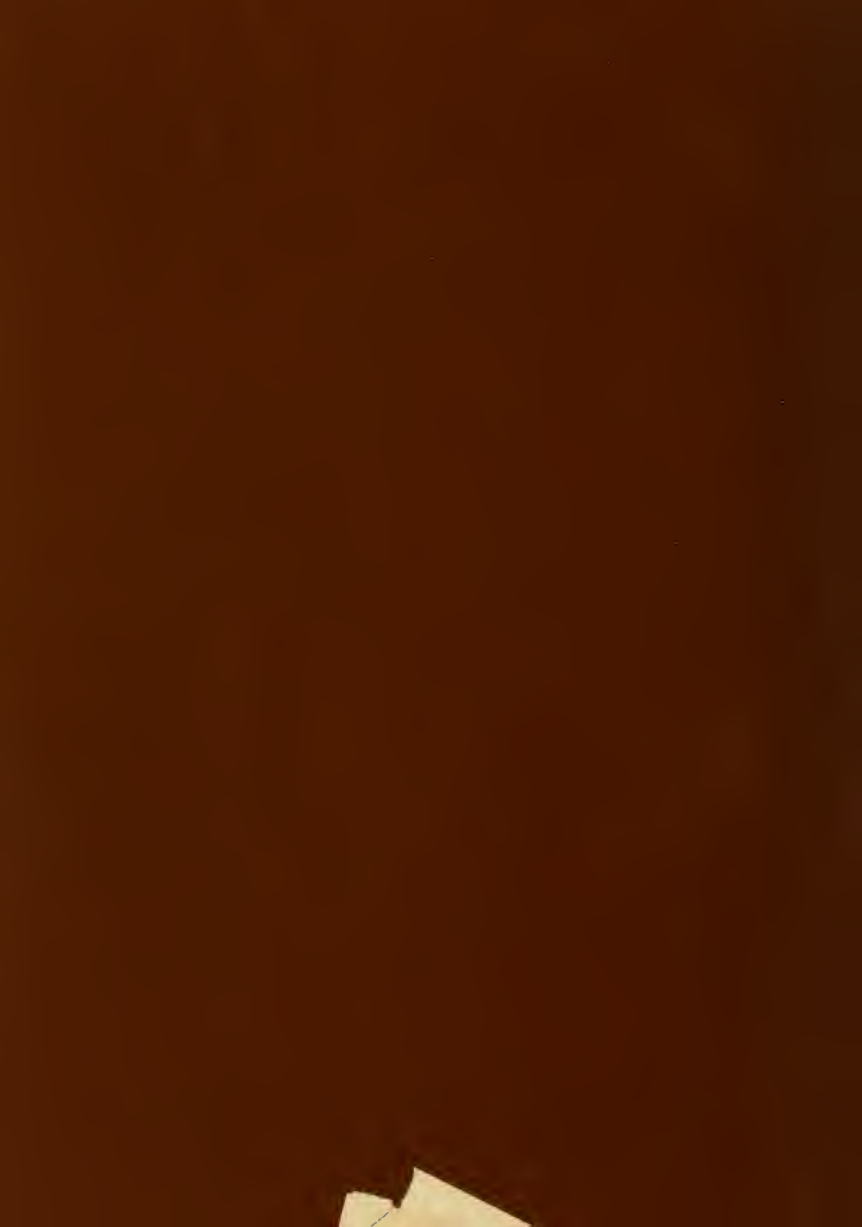
Of failing powers, thou, borne from the shores of
time

On through the gates of morn, wide-flung and fair,
Didst waken radiant in a sunnier clime.

I HAVE much to do,
I have much to say,
While time and tide are slipping away.
With my thought unsaid and my work undone
Time and tide are gliding on.
I've a song to sing so sweet and clear
The world shall pause from its toil to hear.
The world shall forget its toil and pain
And yearn to list to my song again.

THE END.





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